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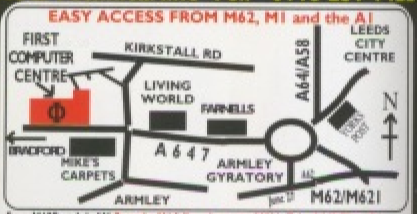
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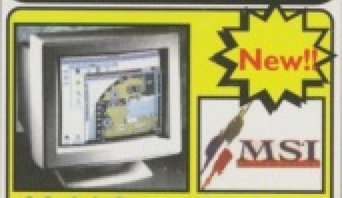
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CU AMIGA MAGAZINE

CU AMIGA MAGAZINE NOVEMBER 1996 • CONTENTS

Editorial



This is the first issue with our monthly CD-ROM attached (for those who purchased the CD issue that is). And boy do we have some treats in store for you on forthcoming CDs. On both CD and floppy disk this issue there is a superb utility: XCAD 2000. Those who remember our cover mounted XCAD Designer two years ago, will just love this. On the games side of things check out the demo of Blobz, it really is a cracking little game. If you're a fan of Lemmings then you're on to a good thing. It's reviewed on page 38.

The feature this month, about connecting your Amiga to the Psion Series 3 and Siena could prove fortuitous with Christmas approaching. We're big fans of these little computers here in CU Amigaland and if you don't already have one then check them out now. Of course the big bonus is connecting them to your Amiga. Write documents on the move and then download them to Final Writer or whatever your fave word processor is.

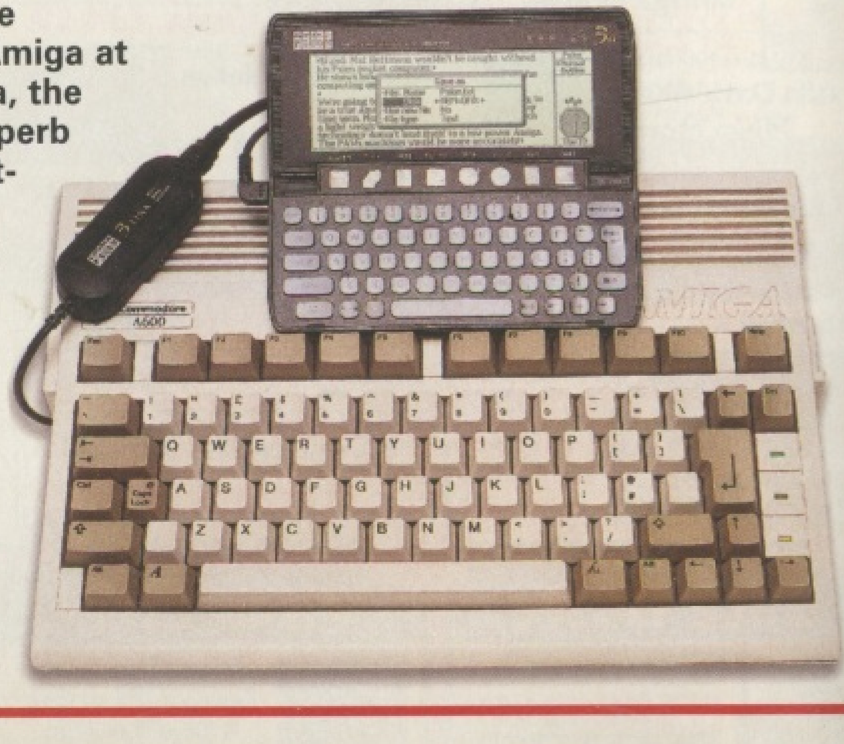
Our cover story this month is the long awaited Chaos Engine 2. We thought it might be ready for review but in the end, although it was nearly there, there were a few minor alterations to be made so instead we were given unprecendented exclusive access to the game to test each level and get a feel for the gameplay. And it looks impressive. See the feature on page 34.

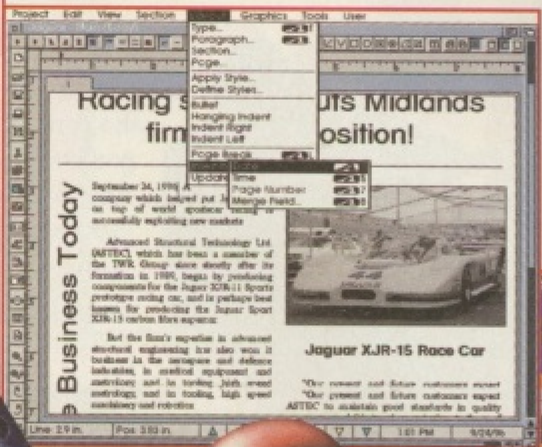
This is my final month at the helm of CU Amiga Magazine. I am moving off to another project so by the time you read the next issue there will be a replacement face grinning away at you from the top left hand corner of this box. Who will it be? Can't say, but rest assured whoever it is will maintain the high standards CU Amiga Magazine sets as the most innovative and exciting Amiga magazine in the business. It has been an exciting two and a half years in the editor's seat and the Amiga has seen many changes during it. Like everything it needs the boost of new technology to survive long term, and hopefully this will happen sooner rather than later. CU Amiga Magazine will keep you informed of events as they happen. Goodbye and thanks for everything.



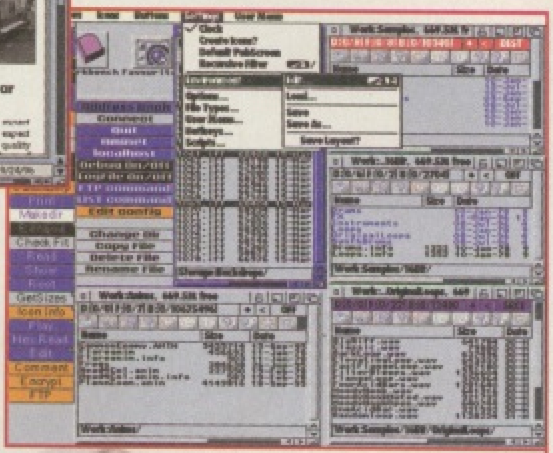
Alan Dykes, Editor

Feature




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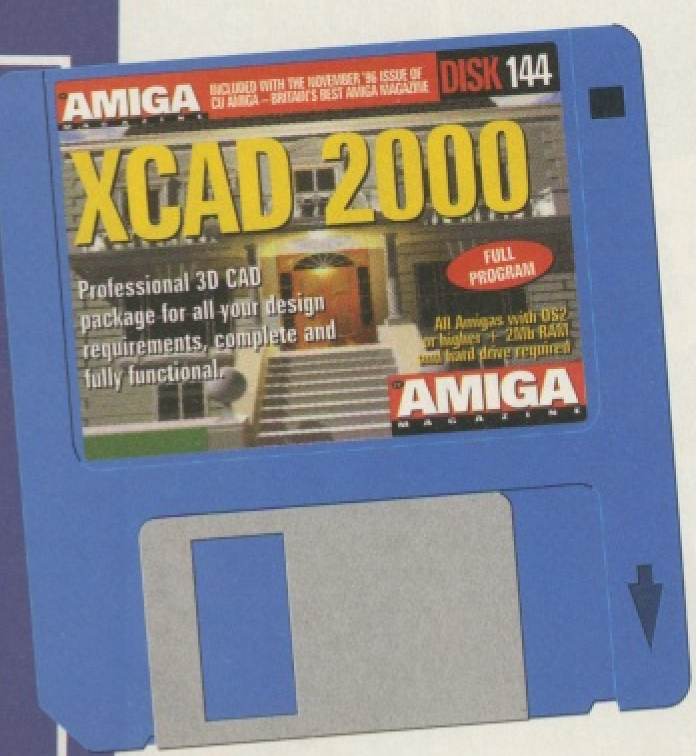
Cover Disks



7 XCAD 2000
Cover disk 142 is something you should always have handy in case of emergencies as it will help you recover those vital files in the case of a total hard drive breakdown. Upper Disk Tools is really two programs: Recovery and DSBackup and they're both yours on this excellent cover disk.

11 Blobz
If wanted a Lemmings clone then you wouldn't find a better one in Blobz. This little game demo has lots of fund and mayehm as you try to guide your little people with sucicidal tendencies to safety. Try out soem of the levels on this game demo to see what we mean. You won't be sorry you did. There's top fun to be had.

DISK 144
XCAD 2000

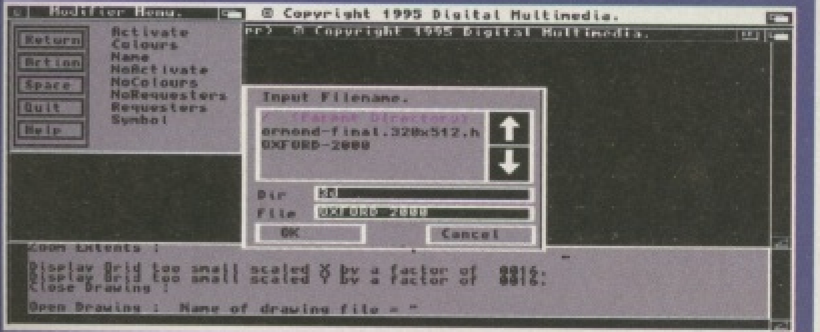


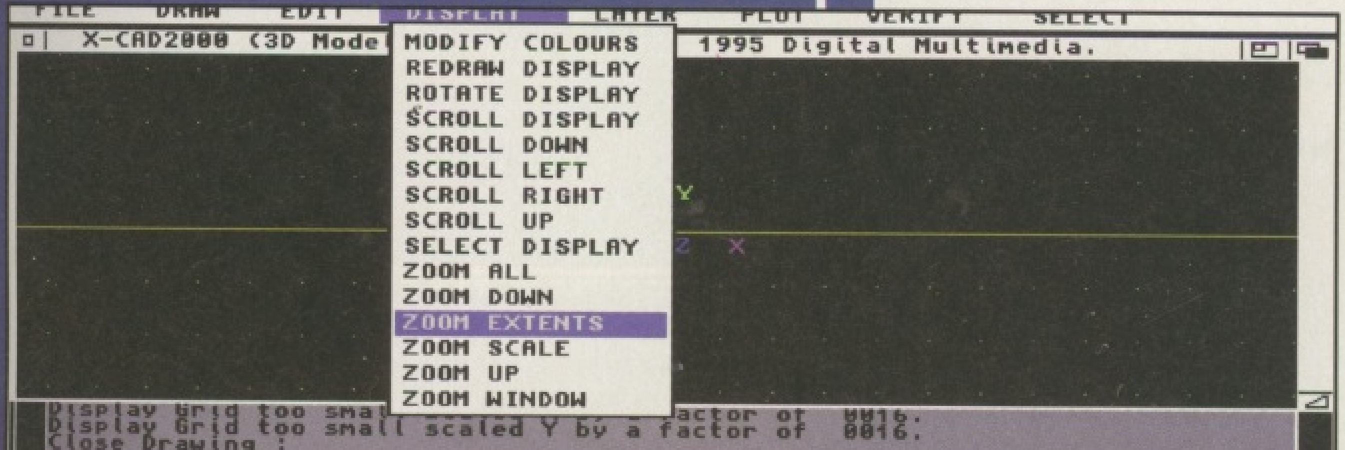
This month's application program is the highly powerful XCAD 2000. Professional 3D CAD is now within your grasp.

Getting started

OK then, cards on the table: XCAD 2000 uses a bit of a quirky interface. While most of it is controlled in the normal way from pull down menus and windows it also has a command line 'console' at the bottom of the screen. This can be used to enter commands directly from the keyboard, although you don't have to use it it all. You'll notice when you make menu selections that commands appear in this box. One way of learning the command line short cuts is to keep an eye on it while you make your menu selections.

The other thing to note is that after you've made your initial menu selection you'll often be faced with a customised sub-menu. These can be different depending on which selection you have made. Sometimes these will also have their own sub-menus for further selections. Generally clicking on Return or Action from these menus will confirm your selection or continue to the next menu. Where a value needs to be selected you'll be presented with a small calculator-style pad. Certain selections require you to first select a parameter then its value, followed by any other parameters that are needed. For example, to alter the rotation of the viewpoint, you could select X, then the amount of rotation for the X axis, then do the same for any rotation you might require around the other axes.





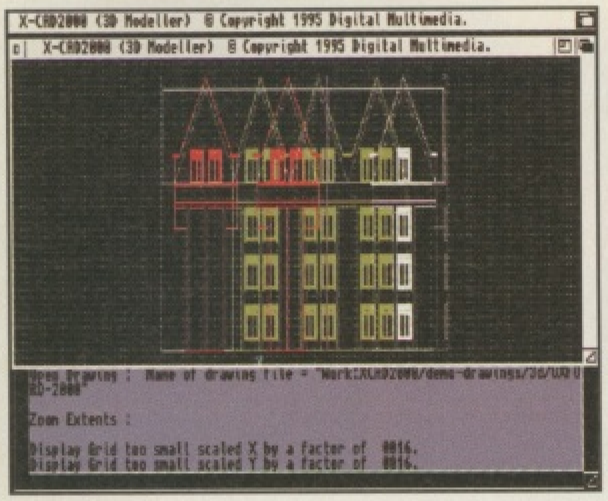
Welcome to the world of 3D computer aided design: CAD. In effect a CAD system is a computerised draughtsman's table with all the paper and drawing tools transferred to your screen. XCAD 2000 is a professional fully featured CAD package for your Amiga and it's yours with this issue of CU Amiga Magazine. You might remember we cover mounted the previous version of XCAD (XCAD Designer) on the December 1994 issue of CU Amiga Magazine. This time we've brought you the full 3D version.

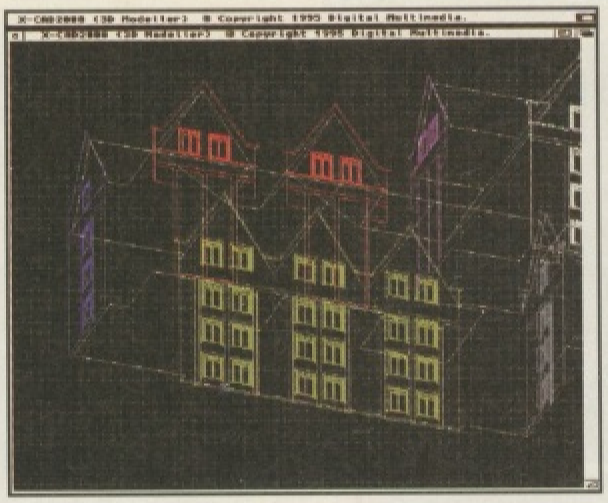
CAD is used to design everything from spacecraft to toothpaste tubes. In many cases it's also combined with CAM (Computer Aided Manufacture) in which case the CAD designs are used to control robotic machinery that goes ahead and turns the drawings into objects. XCAD 2000 is quite capable of handling professional design work and can output its resulting drawings to full 'AO' size plotters.

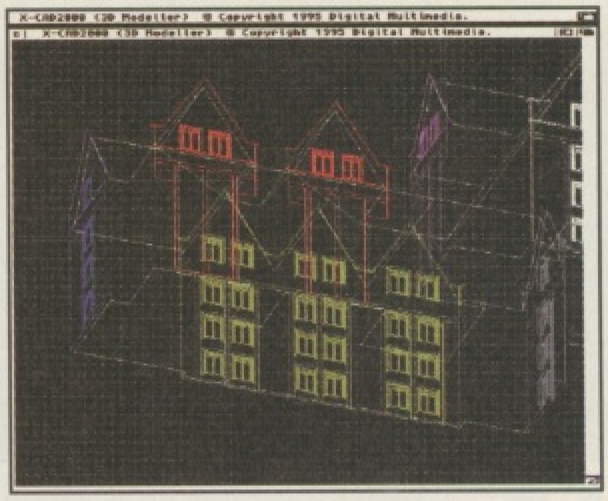
Demo drawing

To load the demo drawing, first start up the 3D version of XCAD 2000. There are a number of icons you can use to start up the program. Each one will launch either the 2D or 3D version in one of a number of screen modes, as indicated by the text labels. Lower resolutions with fewer colours require less memory to run. Select one of the 3D icons. Now you can open the demo drawing. Select Open Drawing from the File menu then click on Return. This will bring up a file requester, in which you should see a drawer called 3D and a file called Oxford-model.xdr. Click on the 3D drawer and then select the Oxford-2000 file.

You won't see anything yet, as the program doesn't







automatically snap its scaling to fit the drawing in the window, so select Zoom Extents from the Display window. The window will redraw and you should see a front view of a building in transparent wireframe.

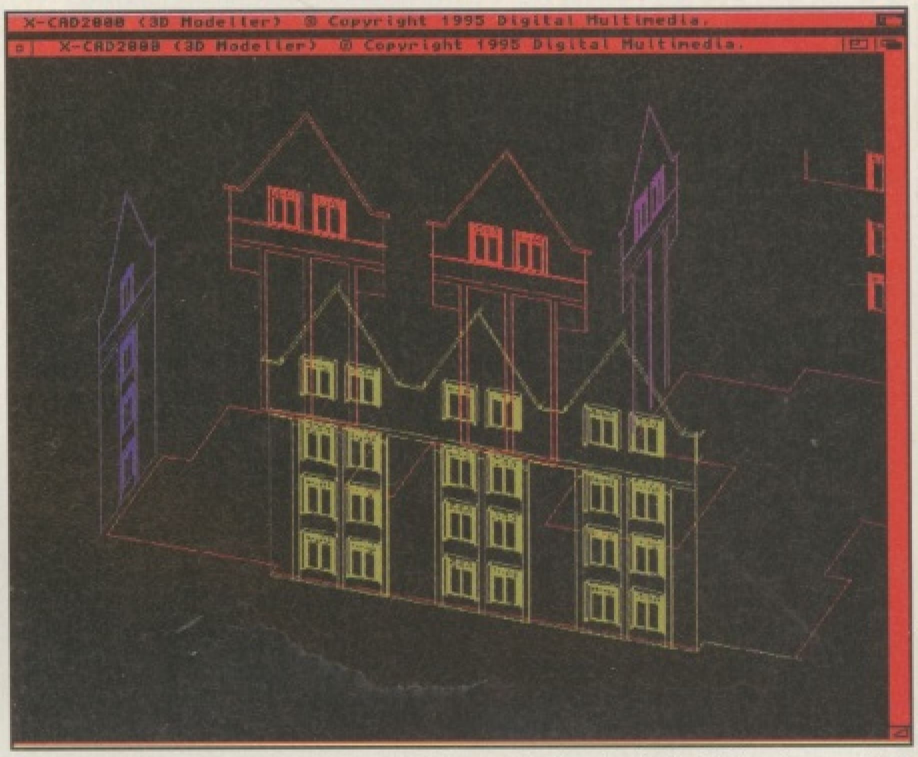
To get a better view of the drawing try altering the rotation values. Select Rotate Display and then click on either X, Y or Z. Now you'll see that little calculator pad mentioned earlier. Use this to enter your required rotation changes in degrees. Alternatively you can use the keyboard to enter the values – you'll see them appear in the command line window at the bottom of the screen either way. To rotate the view through more than one axis, make another selection rather than selecting Return again. This way you can spin the view through all three axes in one go.

Drawing tools

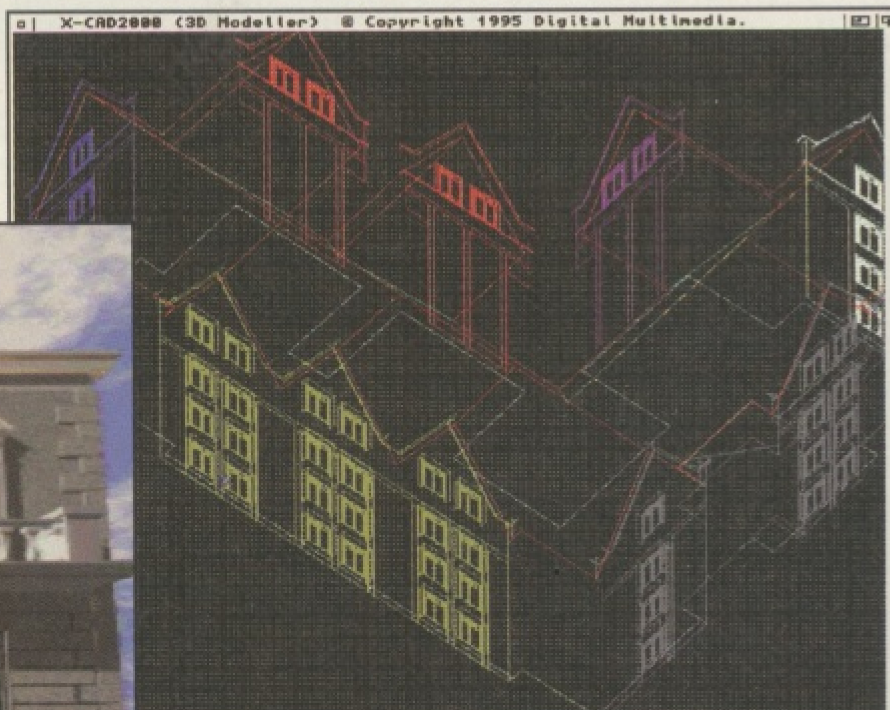
There are tools for drawing basic elements which go to make up your overall projects. These are available from the Draw menu. Circles, lines, points, points, strings and symbols are on the menu. Objects or 'Entities' can be manipulated from the Edit menu. From here you can clone, rotate, mirror and explode various parts of your drawing to save you having to repeatedly draw out similar parts.

Zooming in

The Display menu is loaded with options for zooming in and out of your drawing as well as scrolling commands for moving around in the X and Y axes. Quick zooms can be achieved with the Zoom Window option, which allows you to drag out a specific area of the drawing for closer scrutinisation. The Layer menu is used for navigation around the various layers of your drawing, while the Plot menu opens the options window for sending your drawing to a plotter. The Verify menu gives a breakdown of your elements while the Select menu is used for picking out specific parts of your project.



▲ Unlike XCAD Designer, XCAD 2000 is a true 3D CAD system. The demo drawing included on the cover disk is a good example of how your projects can occupy all three dimensions.



▲ You can start out with simple projects yourself but if you have the need for more complex projects, XCAD 2000 is more than up to the job.



Get the manual

If you want to get the most from XCAD 2000 you can order the full manual which includes all the information you need to get up and running and fully exploit the power of the program. Turn to page 12 for full details.

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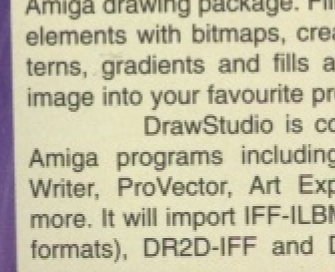
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cover disks Loading instructions

XCAD 2000

Disk number 144

Before you can use XCAD 2000 you need to install it to your hard drive. To do this, boot from your hard drive as usual and insert the XCAD cover disk. Double click the XCAD disk icon and you'll see another icon marked Extract XCAD. Double click this to start the installation. A file requester will appear asking you to select your chosen destination for the program. Select the destination and click on OK. An XCAD drawer will automatically be created and the program will be extracted to your hard drive.

Once the installation is done you can go ahead and run the program straight away from your hard drive. You can choose to start the program in a number of screen modes and colour depths by clicking on one of a few alternative XCAD icons.

AmigaNCP

Disk number 145

As a complement to our Psion-Amiga feature in this issue we've included the software required to link the two together. AmigaNCP can be found on cover disk 145 (the Blobs disk). First of all you need to extract the archive to RAM: or any other device, such as your hard drive. Once this archive has been extracted you can then run the proper installation program from the extracted drawer. This will install the program on your system. For more information on using AmigaNCP see the documentation in the archive and also check out the Psion-Amiga feature on page 20 of this issue.

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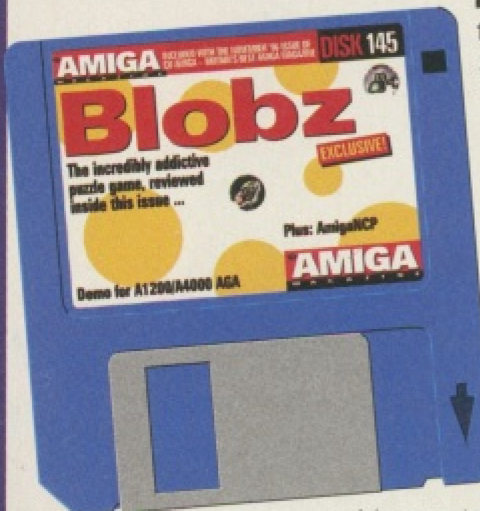
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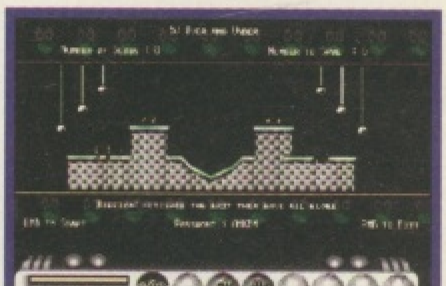
Blobs • Demo for A1200/A4000



Disk number 145: Blobz is a top little game, reviewed on page 38 of this very issue. So you'll be wanting to play the demo then. Blobz is archived onto disk 145 so it needs to be uncompressed onto two separate floppy disks. To do so you'll need to load Workbench first. If you are working from a floppy version of Workbench make sure to write protect it first and, as usual, always write protect your cover disk. Once Workbench is loaded insert disk 145 and double click it with your left mouse button. Three icons will appear. The first two dearchive Blobz disks 1 and 2, the third one is for AmigaNCP and details for it are given opposite. To dearchive the first Blobz disk double click the Unpack_blobz_AGA_Disk1 icon. If you have a hard drive a message will appear telling you that it is copying the disk to RAM. If you are operating from floppy disk you will have to swop disk 145 with your Workbench disk twice before this message appears. When a screen appears asking you to insert a blank formatted disk, do so and press return. Once Blobz disk 1 has been created (the screen returns to the Disk 145 icon and all disk activity ceases), remove the new disk and re-insert disk 145, then repeat the procedure for the Unpack_blobz_AGA_Disk2 icon. The new Blobz demo disk 1 is autobooting, so restart your Amiga with it in DFO: and then change to disk two when requested.

How to play

Blobz is based on Lemmings, and like that pillar of society you have to prevent a load of little creatures (in this case Blobz) from falling over the edge of platforms, getting them to the transporter at the other end of the level. Some transporters have to be activated by picking up diamonds. Others will be activated already. The intro screen on each level will give you specific instructions on what you have to do. Blobz is mouse controlled, even in the menu screens. At the bottom of the screen are various skills, click on these and then click on a particular blob to make it carry out the skill. There is a power bar above the skills which determines how many you can use in sequence.



▲ Study and plan your route on the intro screen.

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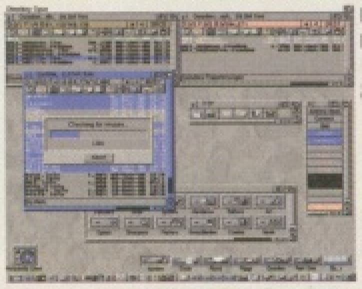
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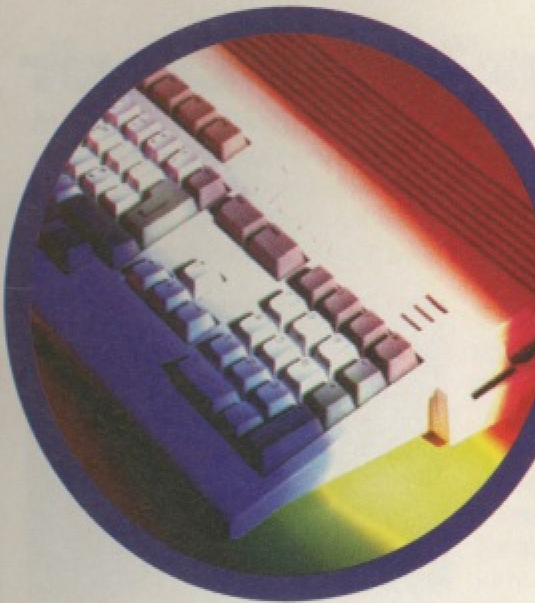
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News

ECTS flops for Amiga

But Guildhall signs important deals

Although it was one of the biggest trade shows in recent history, the ECTS (European Computer Trade Show) had very little to show for itself on Amiga. Despite millions of pounds being spent on stands by the likes of Virgin and Acclaim it was only among the smaller nooks and crannies that Amiga titles appeared, the main point of contact being the Guildhall leisure stand.

Guildhall were displaying the 10 out of 10 range of educational software along with new titles from Audiogenic such as Brian Lara Cricket '96. They were also investigating the distribution of a range of games from a Polish company called Mirage Software – not to be confused with the UK based Mirage, developers of Rise Of The Robots and other titles.

More news from Guildhall concerned the licencing of the rights to MicroProse and Codemasters' one back catalogues of games, to resell as budget titles. The Microprose deal is, according to Guildhall's Managing Director, Giles Hunter, "very close to completion", while the Codemasters one should be sorted out by mid October. Hunters' ultimate aim is to release a complete back catalogue of games at attractive prices from these publishers in time for Christmas. They are also talking to other publishers with a view to similar deals, so the shops should be filling up with Amiga games again soon.

Other Amiga games being promoted at the show were Chaos Engine 2 (once again on the Warner stand – and our cover story this month), XP8 and Ruffian. The latter was originally reviewed last year and was due for release at the time by Grandslam, who, at the last moment, dropped the title. The programmers have now decided to go ahead with distributing and publishing the game themselves, having tweaked the product a little (it is re-reviewed on page 41).

Andy Davidson, fresh from being interviewed for The Times computer supplement, Interface, was at the show telling everyone that the PC is crap and the Amiga rules. In fact he was adamant that Worms AGA (previewed exclusively in CU Amiga Magazine September 1996) is going to be on time and absolutely fantastic. More news on this (and the Alan Dykes revenge worm he is planning to include in the game) in the coming months.

The ECTS has in the past been a showcase for Amiga software along with every other computer and console format under the sun. Traditionally held in both Spring and Autumn in 1997 it seems likely that the Spring show will be cancelled to make way for a much bigger annual show in the Autumn. If this is the case both hardware and software developers have a full year to get the themselves together to put on a better show than they did (apart from stalwarts Guildhall) this year.

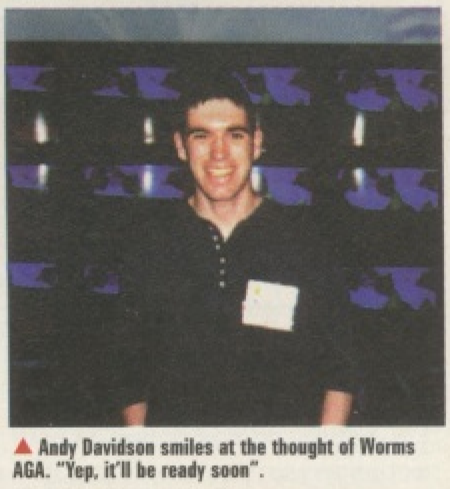
You can contact Guildhall Leisure on 01302 890000 and Team 17 on 01924 267776.



▲ Guildhall leisure were flying the Amiga flag with products from 10 Out of 10, Audiogenic and more.



▲ Ian Jenkins from Effigy software was showing off XP8 at ECTS.



▲ Andy Davidson smiles at the thought of Worms AGA. "Yep, it'll be ready soon".



▲ Gratuitous babes photo alert. Eidos' Tomb Raider models attracted a lot of attention (and probably cost a lot of money), but we wanted to know why it won't be available for Amiga.

PIOS Proceeds Down Different Path



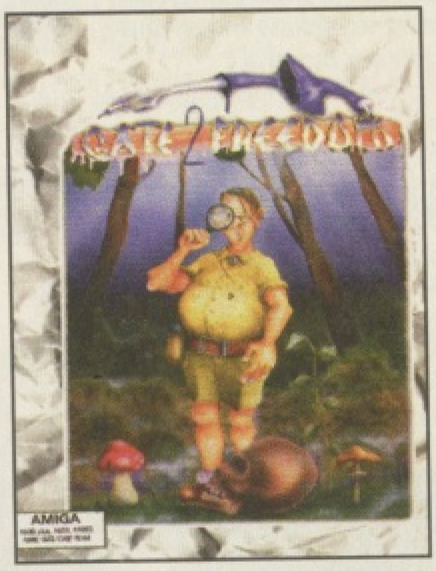
John Smith of PIOS cleared up the situation regarding their clone computer recently, announcing that it would indeed be a Macintosh clone, based around the PowerPC chip and Mac OS 7.5.3. As far as the Amiga is concerned, and as their Web site indicates, PIOS are having problems communicating with VIScorp over licencing the Amiga OS (the buyout, re-scheduled to have been completed on September 18th is still not being confirmed at the time of going to press). As a result they have gone for a new project called 'PIOS 1', which will not be based on Amiga OS, but on a different OS called BeOS, which is being developed with the aid of ex-Commodore engineer Dave Hanie. This system is not compatible with Amiga but is, in the words of Mr Smith "in the spirit of Amiga" and is "the fastest way to progress under the current circumstances." PIOS needs to get a machine on the market as soon as possible, and waiting for VIScorp to sanction a new OS and get licencing arrangements set up will delay this too long.

PIOS were present at the ECTS in an attempt to drum up support from software publishers for their project, but were unwilling to comment on their success apart from saying "some Amiga developers have expressed an interest, but we can't say more than that."

Mirage of Poland

Mirage Software from Warsaw, in Poland have never had an Amiga game published in the UK, but their Sales Manager, Lech Buszczynski, claims that they have literally dozens of Amiga titles available. There's one problem however: they're all in Polish! (As in the language not stuff you put on your shoes.)

We previewed Super Taekwondo Master and Rock Star two months ago, and they've now sent us even more as yet unpublished titles, with interesting names like: Mortal Weapon, CyberForce, Pinball Hazard, Dan Wilder, Gate 2 Freedom, Domain, Jurajski, Rooster and Project Battlefield. Not all of these are of full price quality but some like the aforementioned Super Taekwondo Master, Pinball Hazard and the Doom Clone, Project battlefield, show some promise. Guildhall showed some interest in the games at ECTS, although Mirage may have to get some more reliably translated before a UK distributor takes them on. They might also have to adopt a flexible approach to their company title, as the UK firm of the same name are likely to object.





Direct To Your Door

A new company has set up with the aim of a two pronged attack on the Amiga market: in retail and in software publishing.

Direct Software's shop, based in Northampton, originally stocked all platforms, however as Amiga sales far outnumbered other formats they are now an Amiga-only shop. Convinced of the Amiga's long term success, Amiga Director, Steven Flowers said: "We do not tolerate any discussion on the 'fate of the Amiga', there is no fate, only a future for this machine".

Their new game, Haunted, which is in the early stages of development (see screenshot below) will be a murder mystery affair. We should have a preview very soon.



Stateside

By Jason Compton

Cut price CD-ROMs

Fred Fish, grandfather of freely redistributable software on the Amiga, is cutting prices on Amiga CD-ROMs. The budget line of 'CD Sensations' from Schatztruhe are available for US$12 each and the newest Aminet Set 3 is only US$36. Virtually all Amiga products have been discounted.

Cronus, the company that grew out of Fred Fish's Amiga Library Services, publishes original Amiga titles and acts as the distributor for GTI of Germany. Cronus can be reached at +602-491-0442 voice, +602-491-0048 fax, or http://www.ninemoons.com online.

Myst fake aftermath

Spurred on by the amount of supportive response they have received Myst's creators, Cyan, have begun considering the realities of implementing and publishing Amiga Myst. So far, no commitments have been made. However, Cyan representatives have discussed the Amiga and the potentials of Myst with both VIScorp and Amiga game developers in the US and Europe.

Cheap memory for A3000s

The A3000 is regarded by many as Commodore's best Amiga hardware design. One of the drawbacks to the machine for the modern user is its memory system. At the time it was developed, SIMMs were not the industry standard they are today, and as such Commodore chose a different memory system using now-scarce ZIP chips.

Keith Siders of ProvTech, an American Amiga hardware company, has found a solution. The AmiFAST 3000 card replaces the ZIPs in your A3000 and gives you up to four SIMM slots to expand your machine to up to 16Mb of Fast RAM. The card is available as a finished product, a kit, or a bare PCB – the latter two options are less expensive, but only recommended for hardware enthusiasts who enjoy building their own projects.

The AmiFAST is already shipping in early order quantities and a fully-decked out AmiFAST board (with 16Mb of memory installed) is expected to cost well under US$250 at current RAM pricing.

Finally out

Amiga Atlanta has finally released its 10th Anniversary banquet videotape, dubbed X-10. At press time, pricing was not yet available. The videotape commemorates Amiga Atlanta's groundbreaking 10th anniversary celebration, held in a banquet hall with nearly 150 attendees. Among the celebrities that were on tap (and on tape) for the evening were RJ Mical, father of Intuition, Dale Luck, whose name is burned into the early Amiga libraries, and Dave Haynie, Amiga hardware guru.

Amiga Shows coming up

October: The Midwest Amiga Exposition.

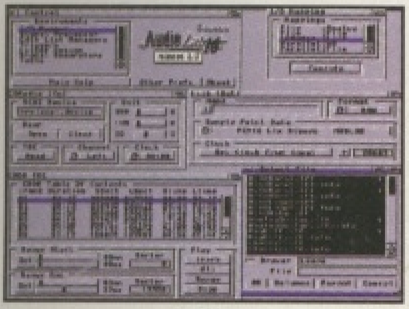
November 29-Dec 1st: Amiga Fest '96, Toronto. For more information, contact the Amiga Fest organizers at +519 393 6270, amazing@cyg.net.

December 13-15: Toronto World of Amiga show. For more information, contact show organizer Christine Vetzal at 613-721-1993.

March 15 and 16: The St Louis Gateway show, Virginia/Washington DC. For inquiries, contact show chairman Bob Scharp at 14850 Phelps Dr., Bridgeton, MO 63044 USA.

AudioLab for Delfina

Maurizio Ciccione's AudioLab 16 is now available in a new version, written specifically for Petsoff's new Delfina DSP sound card (reviewed this issue). Rated at an impressive 84% in the August 96 issue of CU Amiga Magazine, AudioLab 16 is a multi purpose sound processing tool and hard drive audio sequencer with an emphasis on professional quality results. It's the perfect companion for Delfina, reviewed on page 50 of this issue. AudioLab's effects processing can now be carried out much faster and with higher bandwidth with Delfina's 24 bit DSP chip, while 16-bit input and output should ensure the quality of the end results.



We'll take a closer look at the Delfina/AudioLab combination very soon. AudioLab 16 is available from Maurizio Ciccione, Neghelli 9, Alassio (SV) 17021, Italy. Alternatively contact Petsoff at PO Box 1009, FIN-53301 LPR, Finland (E-mail: petsoff@sci.fi fax: 00 358 5 452 3374). A demo of AudioLab 16 can be found on Aminet in the mus/edit section.

Turkish American Revolution Sim

Unlikely though it may seem, an American Revolution sim has arrived on our desk from Istanbul, Turkey. It is a turn based game where you take over command of either British troops trying to resist the rebellion, Colonial troops trying to create it, German mercenaries helping the British or the French, who are trying to manipulate Britain's disadvantage to their benefit by helping the colonials. It's neatly put together and you can visit most of the towns, cities and settlements on the east coast of Her Majesty's Colonies and fight histronic battles.

There is a rolling demo of the game on our CD-ROM this month. For details of how to get hold of the game contact the developer Murad Omay direct by fax in Turkey on +90 (212) 259 07 91.

Power at a low price

HiQ have announced a special low price edition of their Power Station, the all in one solution for adding peripherals to your Amiga A1200 without actually ripping its guts out and sticking the motherboard into a tower system. This version of the Power Station comes complete with an 8-speed SCSI CD-ROM drive, 200 watt power supply with plenty of HD points and a HISoft Surf Squirrell as standard, giving fast serial as well as SCSI II capability. The price? £329.95. Various options are also available. HiQ are on 01525 211327.

The Amiga Zone Moves

The Amiga Zone, one of the oldest online gathering places for Amiga users and information, is moving. Harv Laser, moderator and founder of the Amiga Zone, is moving the service to CalWeb, a California-based Internet service provider.

CalWeb is continuing the Amiga Zone policy of extensive Internet support for Amiga users and unlimited access for US$19.95/month. (Connection fees, where they apply, are extra.) CalWeb will be accessible via Telnet, meaning that Amiga users with existing Internet service can access the Amiga Zone through their own ISP.

For signup information, contact CalWeb at 916-641-9320, http://www.calweb.com. To check out the Amiga Zone's new home page, visit http://www.amiga-zone.com.

Bristol Reserve

Special Reserve have asked us to let you know that they have just opened a shop in Bristol. They will be supplying Amiga games as well as hardware and peripherals. The address is 349 Gloucester Road, Horsfield, Bristol.

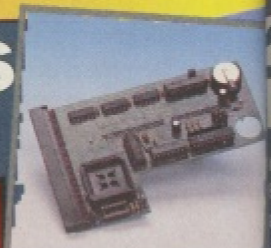
In the October issue we ran a review of MacLite Emulation which said there was a slight bug Cybergraphics drivers. However there isn't, once a a suitable screen mode has been set up MacLite works perfectly.

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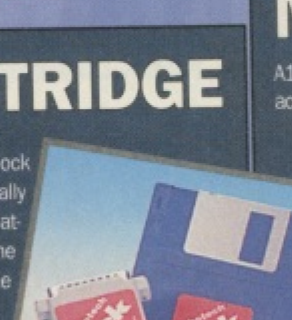
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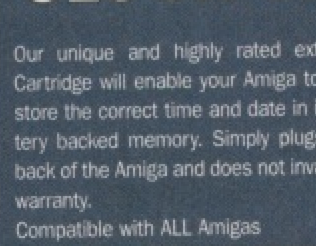
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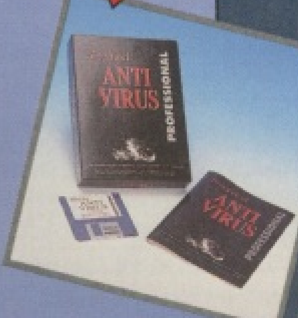


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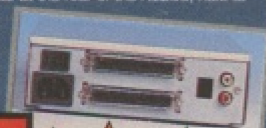
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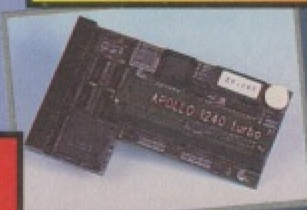
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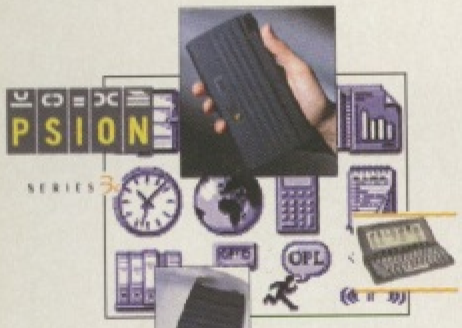
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From the M62 Junction 17 head towards Bury. We are 50 yards on the right hand side after the third set of lights. The door to our premises is next to the florists opposite the Masons Pub.

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In the palm of your Amiga



An Amiga in the palm of your hand? Not quite, but the diminutive Psion mini computer is the perfect little brother. Together they let you take the Amiga experience out on the road.

We're going to have to admit it – there's not going to be a true Amiga portable, notebook or whatever any time soon. Much as it might be handy to have such a light weight Amiga, its custom chip-set technology doesn't lend itself to a low power Amiga. The PAWs machines might be more accurately called 'lugables' rather than true portables.

That's not to say there isn't a way to work on the move. It's just that such a solution would have to be based around a machine that is truly portable and this machine then needs to be linked to the Amiga in some way. The expensive option is to use a PC notebook and link it to the Amiga to share the data. A better option that's both a hell of a lot cheaper and a lot smaller than even a notebook comes in the form of the British developed Psion palmtop computer.

Inexpensive

It might seem odd that we'd be covering another computer platform in CU Amiga but in this case the Psion can be a very useful thing when coupled with the Amiga. The tiny Psion3, 3a and 3c and Siena models are also relatively inexpensive and like the Amiga have multitasking operating system built-in.

This palmtop description isn't an exaggeration either, these units fit into a pocket and run for many hours off a set of two AA batteries. Often called 'organisers' which sadly understates the worth of these machines, the Psions have built-in networking capability and a serial port. Couple this with the PC serial cable and some superb shareware software on the Amiga and we have more than just a tenuous link, the Psion can be made a part of your Amiga.

Psions have some built in software such as a spreadsheet/ database, word processor, spell checker/ thesaurus, agenda/ organiser, alarm clock, world time, calculator and even a nice little Patience card game. And it's got a built in sampler too. These packages aren't limit-



■ Your Amiga's long lost twin brother?

The Psion Palmtop range



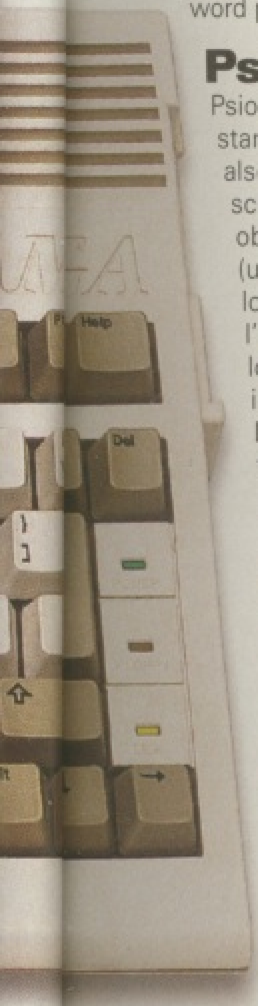



Psion recently announced two new palmtops in their range which should be available by the time you read this. The Psion 3c is a slightly enhanced 3a model with faster communications (57600 baud versus 19200) and infra-red capability. The infra-red function allows 3cs and Sienas to 'beam' data between each other. At the time of writing, Psion were continuing with the policy of shipping the cable only with the expensive link software. Psion suppliers Clove may be able to advice on a cheaper solution that doesn't involve the expense of the PC software. The 3a's cable has a line driver making it more expensive.

The Siena is the really new baby, however. This cut down 3a is considerably cheaper and smaller. The screen is half the size of the 3a – the other half of the lid is occupied by a numeric keypad. The main keyboard itself is smaller too. It still has the basic suite of powerful software and facilities though, despite its reduced price and the fact that it looks like a more traditional 'organiser'. Unfortunately because of the reduced screen size, it's very likely that much of the existing Psion shareware software won't work. While this isn't as impressive as the bigger models (not that any of them could be described as 'big') it does offer an even better value option for those who just want the word processor and organiser features. It's a shame it doesn't have the brilliant 3a/c spell checker though.

Siena

Unlike the 3a, the Siena doesn't have any slots for static RAM and flash RAM cards. These would normally be used as drives to store data and such forth but since the intention is to connect the machine to your Amiga, storage and the lack of the card slots isn't a serious problem. There is an add-on unit which adds an external slot if this capability is necessary. It's likely that commercial software which will work on the Siena in the future will be provided on PC MS-DOS floppy disks where as for the 3a, special ROM cards were used. Even with no 2Mb version, the Siena packs a punch in an even smaller package.



ed to use only on the Psion, the data created by them can be accessed on the Amiga. Especially useful in the case of the word processor.

Psion shareware

Psion software isn't limited to the standard provided packages, it also has its own shareware scene which means you can obtain software for the Psion (usually off the Internet) and load it on via the serial cable. I've got quite a bit of software loaded onto my 2Mb Psion including a map/guide to London, PsionMan MCP clone, terminal package, 3D tank game, Boulderdash clone, off line Web browser, sample editor and more.

Given that the Psion can do all of that and on the move, how do we use it with the Amiga? Well you need a package called AmigaNCP. This is a full networking package for the Amiga which works rather like Parnet. With Parnet you reference a remote device by prefixing is name with NET:. To look in RAM: on the other machine you examine NET:RAM/ instead. AmigaNCP is exactly the same except the device is NCP:.

The filesystem on the Psion is based on MS-DOS which means it's limited to 8.3 filenames. Its drives also look like MS-DOS with single letter designations. A: and B: are the RAM/ROM card slots (yes the Psion has two), while M: is the internal memory, like a RAM: drive in the Psion's battery backed internal memory. This is where all the applications and data are stored that aren't present in its ROM.

Up and running

Installing AmigaNCP is quite easy via the installer script provided but there is a file called NCP.config which will need to be configured by hand. Type the following lines into the AmigaDOS shell;



```
SetENV NCP.config
"DEVICE=serial.device
UNIT=0 BAUD=19200"
```

then;

```
Copy ENV:NCP.config ENVARC:
```

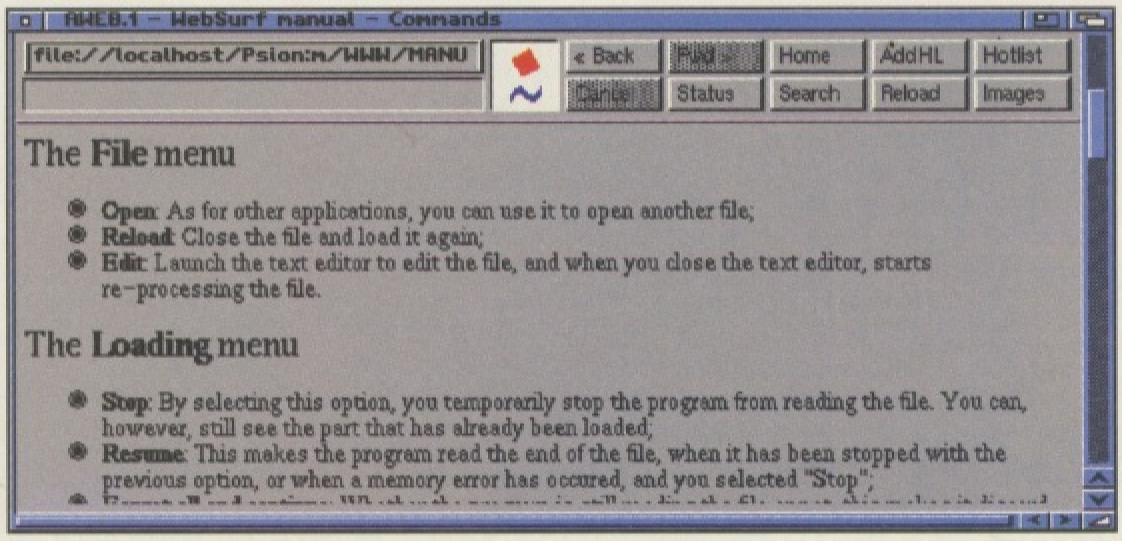
Change the number after BAUD to 9600 if you have a Psion 3 and not a 3a, 3c or Siena. All you need to do now is plug in the cable to the Amiga and the Psion and run the software. You run it by clicking on AmigaNCP-FileServer or AmigaNCP-FileSystem. Use the first to allow the Psion to access your Amiga and the second to access the Psion from your Amiga. Note that the link cable has nice 25 and 9 pin connectors on the end, superb for the Surf Squirrel. Plug it in to the Surf Squirrel and alter the DEVICE to squirrel serial.device.

Don't feel tempted to change the baud rate to higher than 19200 unless you're the lucky owner of Psion's latest '3c' or 'Siena' which can handle up to 57600 baud. Once the Amiga side is sorted out, you'll have to select Remote Link from the Psion's 'Special' menu. Toggle the remote link to On and change the baud rate to the maximum allowed which should match the value in NCP.config. A warning with the link cable and the 3/3a, the Psion powers the line driver (the box in the middle of the cable) and so battery life is reduced when in use.



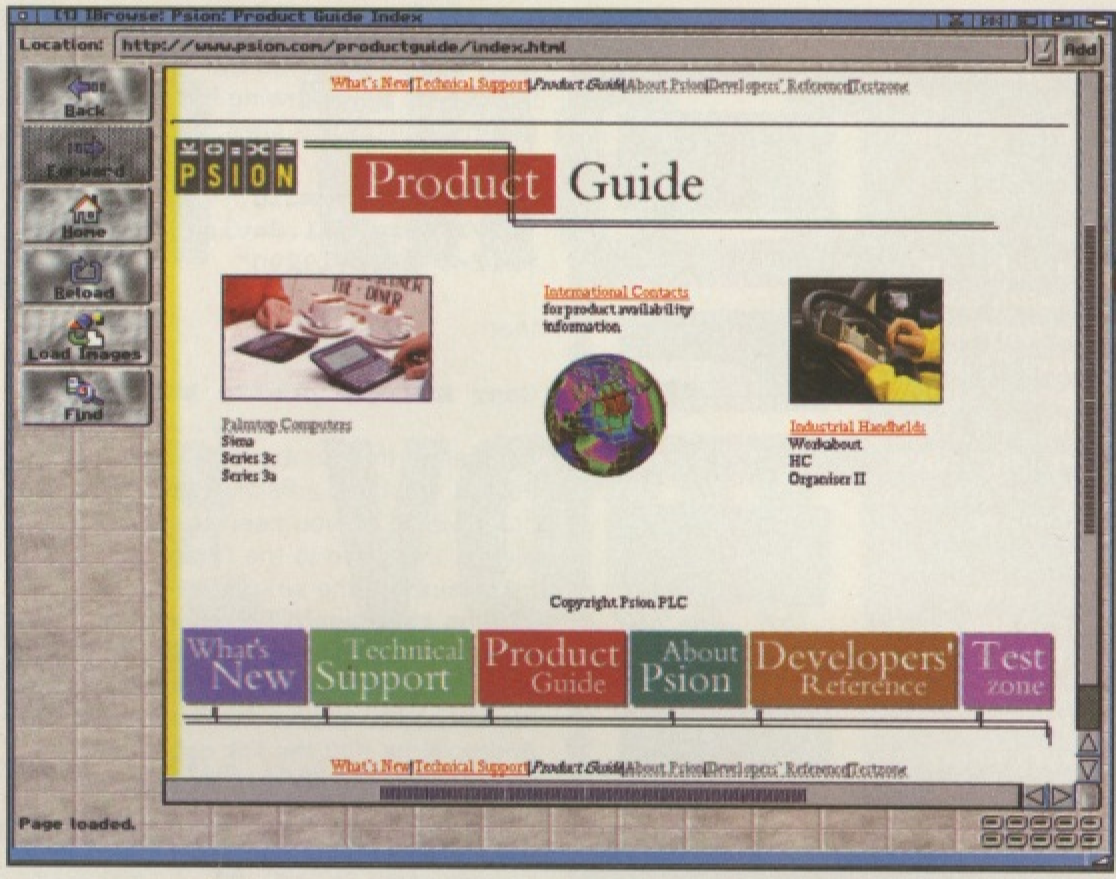
Is all in order?

To test it's all working, get a directory of NCP: as there should be an icon called Psion on your Workbench. You can also use the Shell or a directory utility such as Directory Opus. In the NCP: drive you should see all the Psion's drives listed. Enter the M/ drawer and you see the directories in the Psion's main backup memory. You can copy files to and from your Amiga and Psion with ease. This is



■ There's plenty of software for the Psion available from the net.

Continued overleaf ►►►



■ The Internet offers a rich resource of software and support for the Psion palmtop.

in fact how you install Psion software obtained on disk or from this month's massive archive of Psion software on the covermounted CD.



Now to test the Psion side of it, enter the Word application. Type some text and then choose Save As from the menu. Cursor down in the file requester to Disk. Cursor right through this until REM:: appears. You'll be able to move through your Amiga drives like this. Once the drive is chosen cursor down to the filetype and change it to text, fill in a file name and save. Bang, the ASCII file will appear on your Amiga on the chosen drive. Nifty or what?

Psion Amiga Shell

There's another trick which can be performed with the Psion and a link cable. When the remote link is enabled on the Psion, choose install with Psion-I again. Change the drive to C: and install the comms application ... a little secret terminal package hidden away on a ROM drive. Turn the remote link off. Set your Amiga's serial prefs to 19200, RTS/CTS etc. Run the comms application and also set it up for 19200 baud, RTS/DTS and leave all the other handshaking options off.

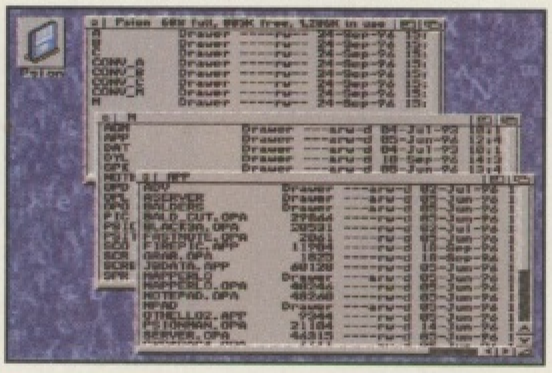
Now on the Amiga, make sure you have AUX: mounted. There may be a mountfile of this name in Devs:Storage/Dosdrivers. Mount this by



using Mount followed by the full path to the AUX mountfile. Next, type Newshell AUX: and miraculously you should have an AmigaShell open on the Psion in the Comms package. You can do anything on this shell that you can do on a shell running on the Amiga. Run programs, fetch directories etc.

A practical application of this would be to have a modem connected to the Amiga on auto-answer. If there's a newshell AUX: active, you'd be able to use the Psion and its modem accessory to dial in to your Amiga and control it remotely via a Shell. Psion modems also interface to cellular phones for the ultimate in portable communications. At the moment the Psion has no TCP/IP stack (Internet software) of its own but this is apparently coming. There's already Email and WWW clients (though for offline use).

Most of us would find the Psion useful as a go between, as a little piece of the Amiga in a pocket. Until the Amiga gets truly portable this is the way it will have to be.



However, in the meantime it's still a partnership made in heaven coupling both the best of desktop and palmtop computing.

Find out more

Palmtop is a substantial bi-monthly magazine dedicated to this little machine. It's well worth a look if you want to find out more about it, especially if you're interested in developing your own tools for use with your Amiga. You can phone them on 01869 249 287 or Email them at 100602.3723@compuserve.com. ■

Mat Bettinson



Price list

Psion 3a - 512K £257.32
Psion 3a - 1MB £292.57
Psion 3a - 2MB £329.00

PsiWin link cable (3a) + PC software £72.85
(ask about cable with no PC software)

Psion MicroFax modem £186.82

Psion 3c - 1MB £334.88
Psion 3c - 2MB £393.62

Siena - 512K £169.20
Siena - 1MB £229.12

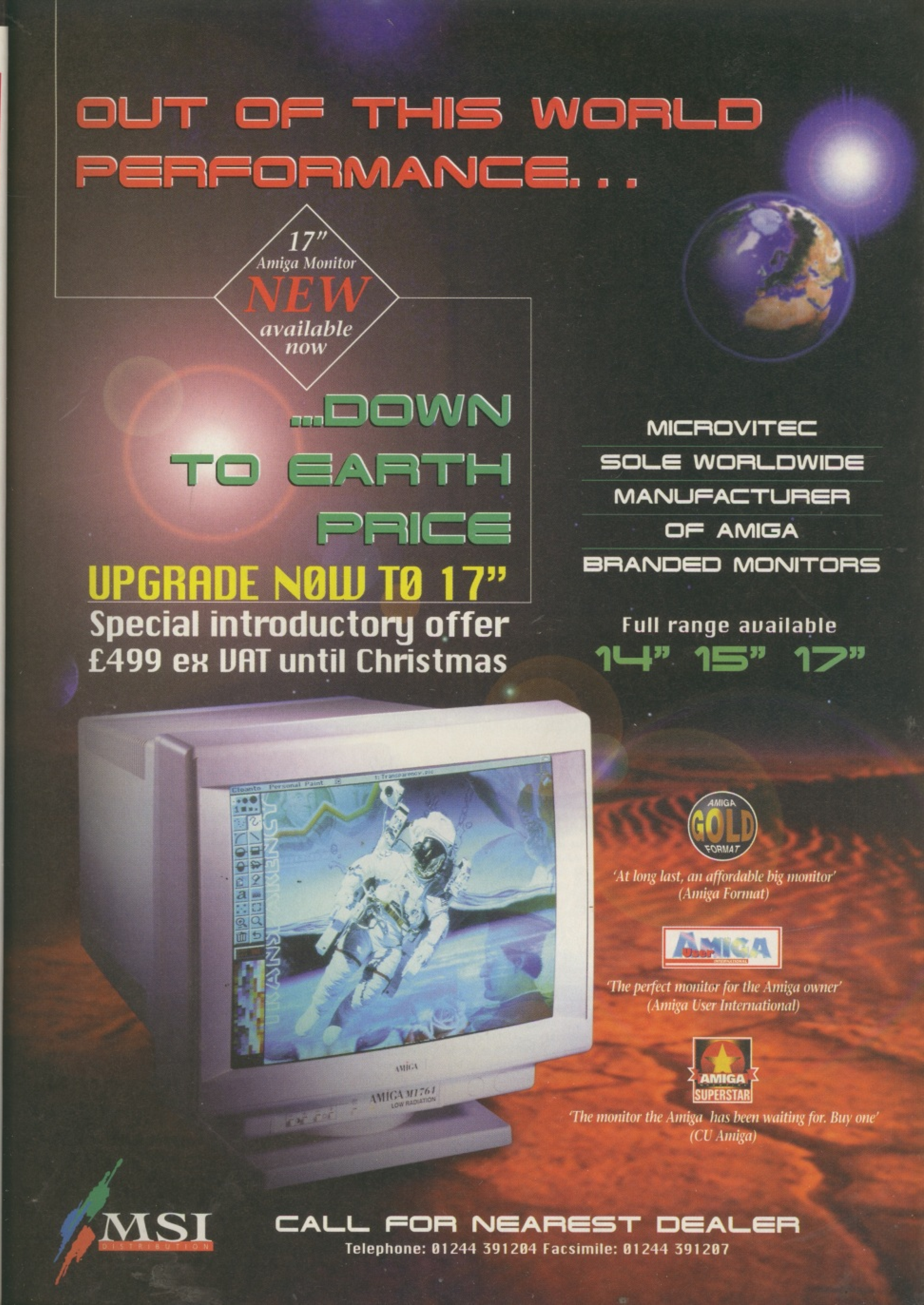
PsiWin link cable (3c + Siena) + PC software £79.90
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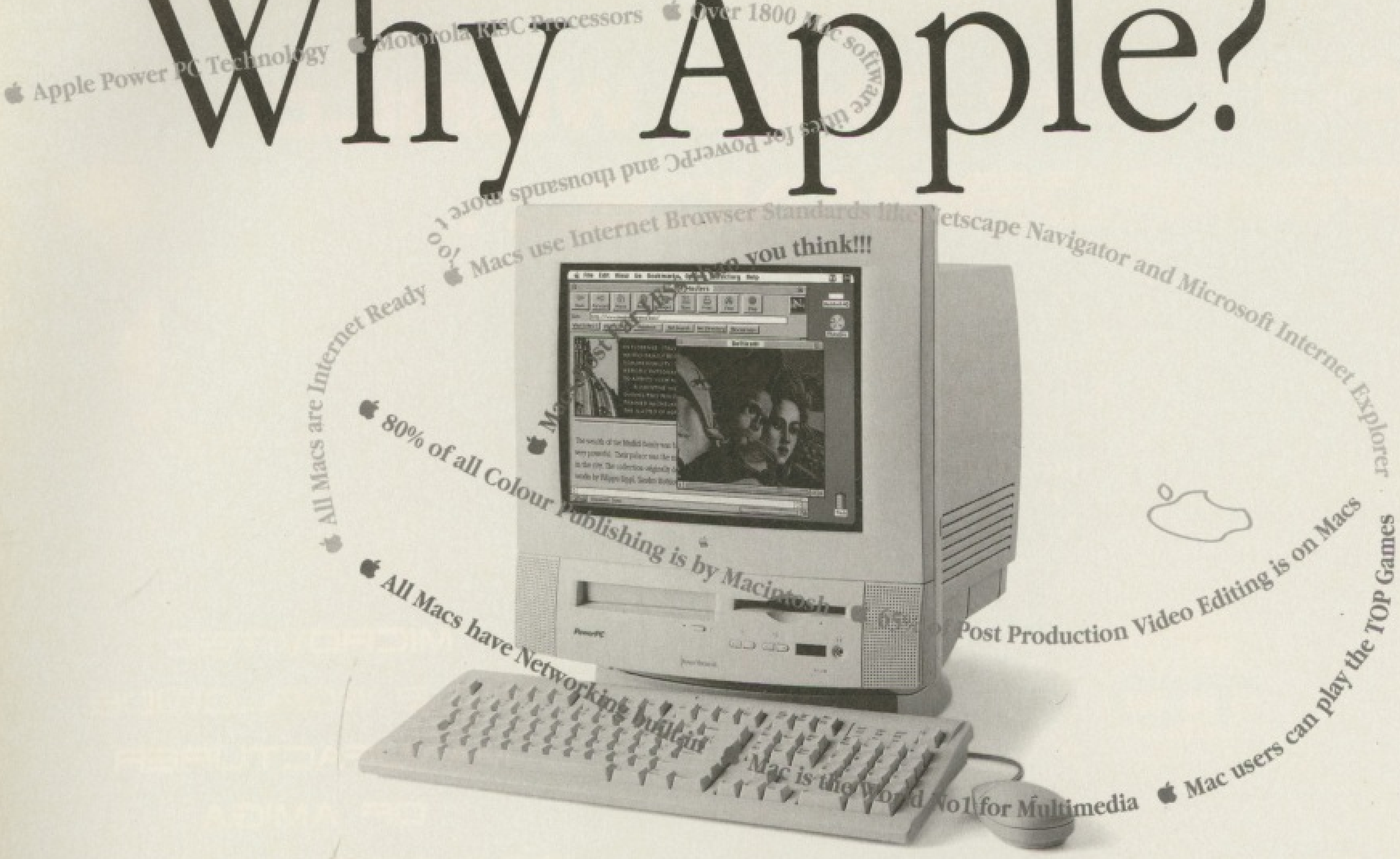
Note: Clove Technologies' Psion pages are on this month's cover CD

Psion and CUCD4

We've included virtually all of the Psion's freely redistributable software base on this month's covermounted CD. In fact it's all of Frontiernet's Psion support Internet FTP site. You'll find this all in the Magazine/Psion directory. You'll need to access it via the CLI or a directory utility and all of the archives will be in LZX archive format (repacked from the original zips). For this reason there's an UnLZX program in the root of this directory. Simply CD to where you'd like to extract the archive to and then enter UnZip <path to archive>. There's almost always installation instructions but generally this will require you moving files into NCP:M/APP and then installing with the Psion-I key combination. This collection should keep your Amiga/Psion combination happy for a very long time.


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Why Apple?



One day we may see the rebirth of the Amiga with a PowerPC processor and other new features to enable it to compete again with today's systems. Sadly though, more than two years since Commodore's demise, very little of substance has happened. We've seen prototypes and promises, but that's about it...

Perhaps some can wait for the final outcome, but if you need more performance, without paying the earth - and you need it today - there's one real alternative to consider now...

Only Apple can offer you both desktop and portable computers that truly match the ease of use the Amiga brought to your desktop. Affordable Apple Macintosh systems have PowerPC RISC processors with thousands of off-the-shelf programs available in areas where the Amiga was previously so strong.

And, if you need to have the most compatible of all computers, Macintosh is currently the only system that can run MacOS, DOS and Windows applications via optional DOS Cards or SoftWindows.

Why Macintosh?

Performance:

All Macs are PowerPC based (except PowerBook 190s). Even entry level systems run at 100MHz or 120MHz, with 200MHz powerhouses and 180 MHz multi-processor systems at the top of the range.

Apple is the only mainstream computer company who has been able to make the transition from the older CISC (complex instruction set computing) processors to the newer and faster RISC (reduced instruction set computing) processor technology - whilst still retaining full backward compatibility with previous software.

Remember 486, Pentium/Pro & 680X0 are merely CISC!

Software choice:



Over 1,800 native software packages (written specially for PowerPC Macs) have been shipped since Power Macintoshes were launched in 1994 - plus there are thousands of existing programs which can also be used. Industry standard programs such as Word, Pagestream, Word Perfect, Page FileMaker Pro, Excel, Quark Xpress, Photoshop and many others have all been developed for the Mac.

Creativity:



- Macintosh still dominates the creative world with an 80% market share in colour publishing.
- 65% of post-production video editing is on Macs.
- Macintosh is the most widely used system for the creation of Internet web pages.
- Most magazines (probably the one you're reading right now) are created on Macintosh.

The Internet & Communication:

- All Macs are Internet ready; many include a 28,800bps modem with full send/receive fax and answerphone management facilities.
- Industry standard web browsers, Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer, were developed for the Mac. Both give full access to all Web sites with new Internet page layout features like auto-tables and on-screen movies.
- The Internet's standard format for video files, called QuickTime (or QuickTime for Windows), was an Apple development. Of course it comes as standard with every Mac.



Connectivity & Expandability:

- All Macintoshes have networking built in as standard, so connecting systems together and adding shared printers etc. couldn't be easier.
- All Macintoshes have an external SCSI connector as standard (except Duos) - adding external drives, cartridge drives, scanners etc. really is Plug-and-Play.
- Low-cost digital cameras can be plugged into the Mac for instant real image input.
- Inexpensive industry standard PCI cards can be used in all Mac systems from the 5400 upwards.



Education & Edutainment:

- Many quality Macintosh titles are widely available. Dorling Kindersley offer superb titles like The Ultimate Human Body and History of the World whilst Microsoft publish Encarta, Cinemania and Dinosaurs. Because Macintosh is the preferred system within many educational establishments, high quality software is assured.



Multimedia:

- Apple is the World's No. 1 Multimedia PC vendor.
- All desktop Macs have a fast CD-ROM drive as standard (portables get internal CD soon too).
- In 1995, 42 of the top 50 selling CD-ROM titles worldwide were developed on the Macintosh.
- Many Macintoshes have built-in TV with teletext so TV clips can be recorded directly to disk as QuickTime movies.
- Many Macintoshes have built-in video in and out, for direct recording to VCRs.
- Some Macintoshes have internal digital video editing facilities as standard, others can be upgraded to include this facility with ease.



New 5400 'Black Mac' ideal for your home.

Recreation & Games:



- Top games like The Ultimate Doom, Myst, Rebel Assault II, Dark Forces, Descent, Afterlife, Lost Eden, Legend of Kyrandia, Full Throttle and The Dig have all been developed for Macintosh.

Output & Presentation:

- Connecting and using colour printers (from Epson, HP, Apple and others) to Macs is so easy and the results are truly outstanding.
- Many software packages are available offering image manipulation and superb photo quality output.



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Screen Scene



Chaos Engine is practically nanoseconds away from completion, so we've decided to let you have a look at the most up to date version. This and lots more. See for yourself.



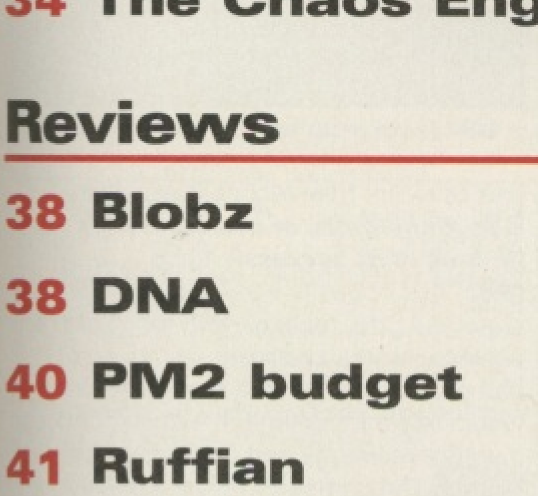
JETPilot 31

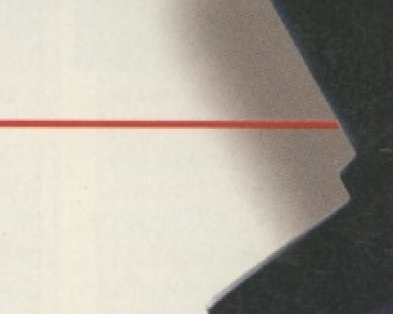
Reach for the Stars

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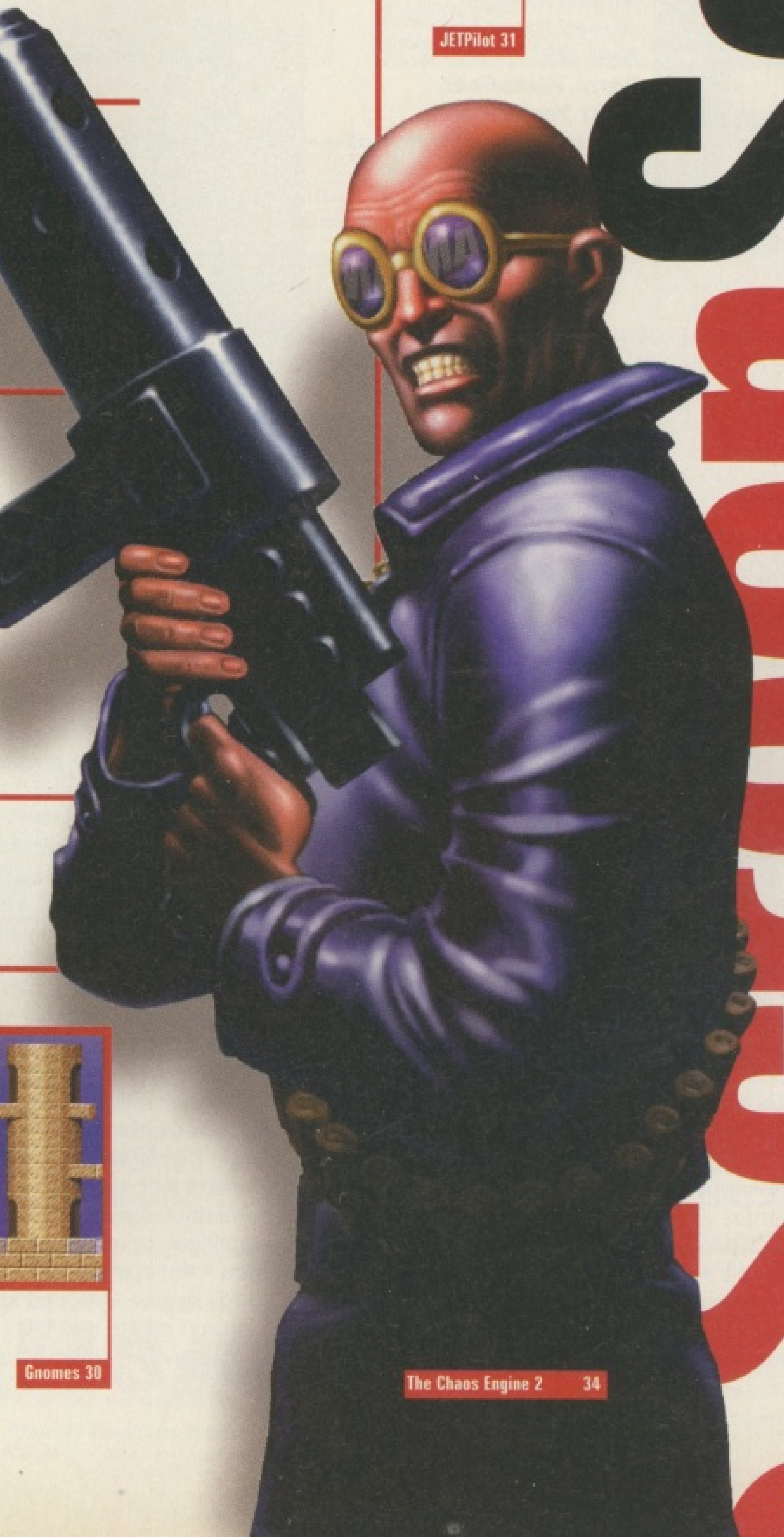
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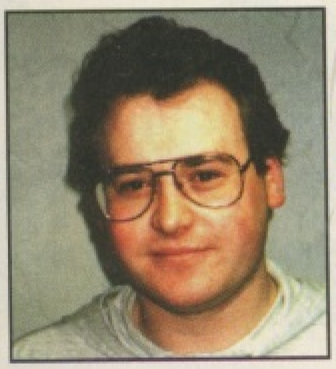
Gnomes 30



The Chaos Engine 2 34

Reach for the stars

CU Amiga Magazine talks to Team17's Martyn Brown, a man renowned for superb game production and copious amounts of beer consumption.



▲ Martyn Brown: the Amiga put him where he is today.

Name: *Martyn James Brown*
Age: *29*
Born: *Wakefield, West Yorkshire*
Occupation: *Director of Development for Team17 Software*
Biggest Success: *Alien Breed series and Worms*

CU: ***When did you first become involved in the games industry?***
MB: "While I was at Tec' in 1985 myself and a friend wrote a Spectrum game called Henry's Hoard. I was 17 but had been involved with computers and video games since I was about seven or eight. We formed Alternative Software which is still going today although I've had nothing to do with it since the original game."
CU: ***And your first Amiga experience?***
MB: "As soon as I saw an A1000 in 1985, it was a must-have. As a penniless student, I couldn't afford an Amiga until 1987 when I got an A500. The bug kicked in then – it was real whizz-bang stuff then."

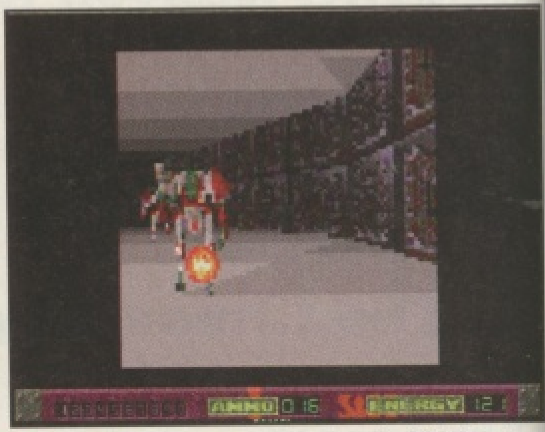
"Technical feats are cool but I've had lots of good looking, expensive beers that tasted bad."

CU: ***Last month, Jon Hare said the Amiga is the best thing that's ever happened to the industry. What do you think?***
MB: "The Amiga played a massive role in the industry to deliver near arcade quality games with good sounds and visuals. The back-bedroom coding and demo culture gave it a buzz and it was the machine that everyone could get access to. An affordable development system that can deliver quality ideas is exceptionally important."



▲ Character, atmosphere and utter fun made Worms into a hit.

CU: ***Which games made the Amiga the great games machine it was?***
MB: "Defender Of The Crown, Shadow Of The Beast, Speedball, Kick Off, Pinball Dreams, Sensible Soccer and Worms. The early ones for showing the leap up from other systems, the latter ones for visuals and sheer playability."
CU: ***Andreas Tadic and Rico Holmes (Alien Breed, Alien Breed 2, Superfrog) played an important role in launching Team17 into the industry. Yet we saw little from them after these titles why?***
MB: "Sadly, the next project after AB2, King Of Thieves, didn't work out – there was too much complacency. They'd had a lot of success the previous two years and human nature does make you step down a gear when life gets a little easier, even though they are both still very capable."
CU: ***AB3D2 appears to be aimed at high spec Amigas only. This is surely a showpiece rather than a commercial venture?***
MB: "AB3D worked really well and, in terms of gameplay, is as good as it gets on a standard machine. AB3D2 was never really a commercial venture because we knew the market was shrinking but we had the opportunity to 'go out with a bang'. We tried to listen to everyone and what they wanted – the upshot was a 4Mb, 030 minimum 3D engine. We tried to deliver that and a good game, too. But I would rather the company be remembered for good games rather than technological feats."



▲ AB3D2 gave the punters what they wanted: a 4Mb 030 engine.

CU: ***And Worms, of course. What's the formula to its success?***
MB: "Its popularity was based on complete and utter multi-playing fun. It also had character and a charming atmosphere. I had a lot of belief in the fact that Worms would make it big time. It helps enormously if you have energy and conviction in all that you do. The gameplay really shone out – and people looked at the game for once rather than fancy packaging. Technical feats are cool but I've had lots of good looking, expensive beers that tasted bad."
CU: ***You've always had a great relationship with Amiga users, taking time to answer Emails and talk to press. Are you keen to keep Team17 friendly and as non-corporate as possible?***
MB: "I have benefited enormously from the Amiga scene. I was on the 'other side' for a number of years and a keen enthusiast. I know what it's like to ogle the 'development dream'. I've been fortunate enough to get myself involved so I always take time to talk to the people who put me and the company where we are today. I've always tried to steer Team17 towards being laid back and approachable."
CU: ***How important has the Amiga been to Team17 Software's success?***
MB: "Without the Amiga, there wouldn't be a Team17. Simple as that." ■
Alan Bunker

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Comparative MIPS performance figures measured using SysInfo. Each board had the appropriate SIMM fitted (required to activate accelerator).

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Gnomes

■ **DFR: December** ■ **Publisher: OTM ✆ 01827 312 302**





HA, HA, HA, HEE, HEE, HEE' sang the little laughing gnome (just before getting horribly spiked to death). Getting spiked surely wasn't in the lyrics of everyone favourite old time tune now was it? No but a bit of poetic license is allowed when we're referring to OTM's latest platform game, Gnomes.

Spanning about 50 levels your job is to lead your little men to safety making sure that they don't get spiked, drop to their certain death or meet a myriad of other grisly fates.

OTM promise lovely graphics and lots of nice tunes to go along with the cheery chappies as they amble along trying to avoid that great big garden centre in the sky.

At this point Gnomes sounds very similar to Bograts from Vulcan (previewed last month) only the stars of this game are rather more attractive. However, there is a major difference in that Gnomes will run on both PC and Amiga. The Amiga side was handled by Funrise Entertainment in Germany while the PC side was developed by CyberArts, Finland. And more improved graphics and sound effects are promised for some of the more powerful machines.





As a result of this dual format cooperation, OTM have designed an installer for Gnomes so that the game will recognise which make of Amiga it is running on and boot up the relevant version, which is good news for us all. Cool or what? You'll agree if you take a look at the screenshots here that it is looking good so far.

Gnomes will run on all 1Mb machines including OCS, ECS and AGA machines and should retail for around £29.95. We should have a full review for you next month. ■

Lisa Collins

JETPilot

■ DFR: November ■ Publisher: Vulcan Software © 01705 670 269



There's a lot of snobbism that goes on amongst the games industry. If something hasn't got awesome graphics then it's not worth playing. I don't hold to this theory. If a game's fun to play and doesn't cost an arm and a leg then it's worthwhile in my books. I believe that Vulcan software follow this school of thought. OK maybe AMOS graphics aren't state of the art but most people know that I like the Valhalla series and think that they are value for money. So I am looking forward to Vulcan's next venture in the gaming world. And let's face it they are one of the few companies who are actually out there consistently producing the goods. For their latest offering, Vulcan Software have taken a turn away from the path of puzzle and adventure games and this time have aimed for the skies. JETPilot is a flight simulator which will be based around statistics and handling methods of real-life jets such as the Lockheed F-104 and the English Electric Lightning (that should mean something to plane spotters, I presume).







▲ Vulcan say the controls will be as realistic as possible.



▲ OK, let's lift this baby off the ground.

Again, Vulcan are catering for all Amiga owners so JETPilot will run on all Amigas.

However, they recommend a 2Mb A1200 to get the best out the features on offer. These features will include the ability to change the weather conditions to suit you and 360 degree cockpit vision which should help you complete the 20 missions that are laid out for you.

Watch this space or another one if you prefer for a review very soon. ■

Lisa Collins

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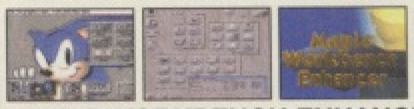
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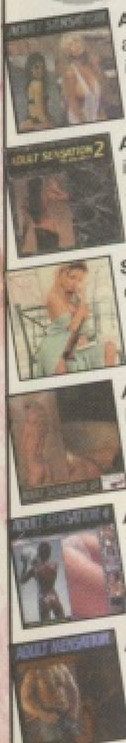


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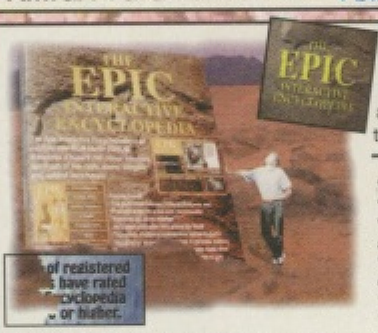


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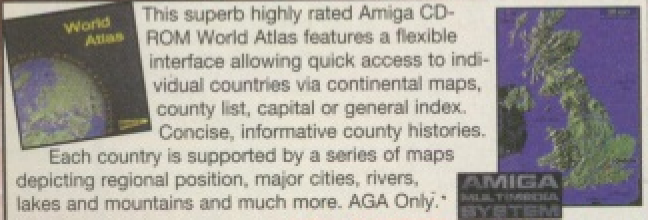
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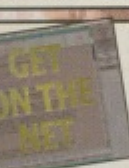
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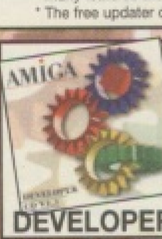
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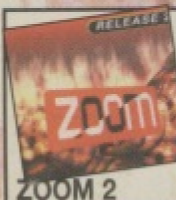
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The Chaos Engine 2



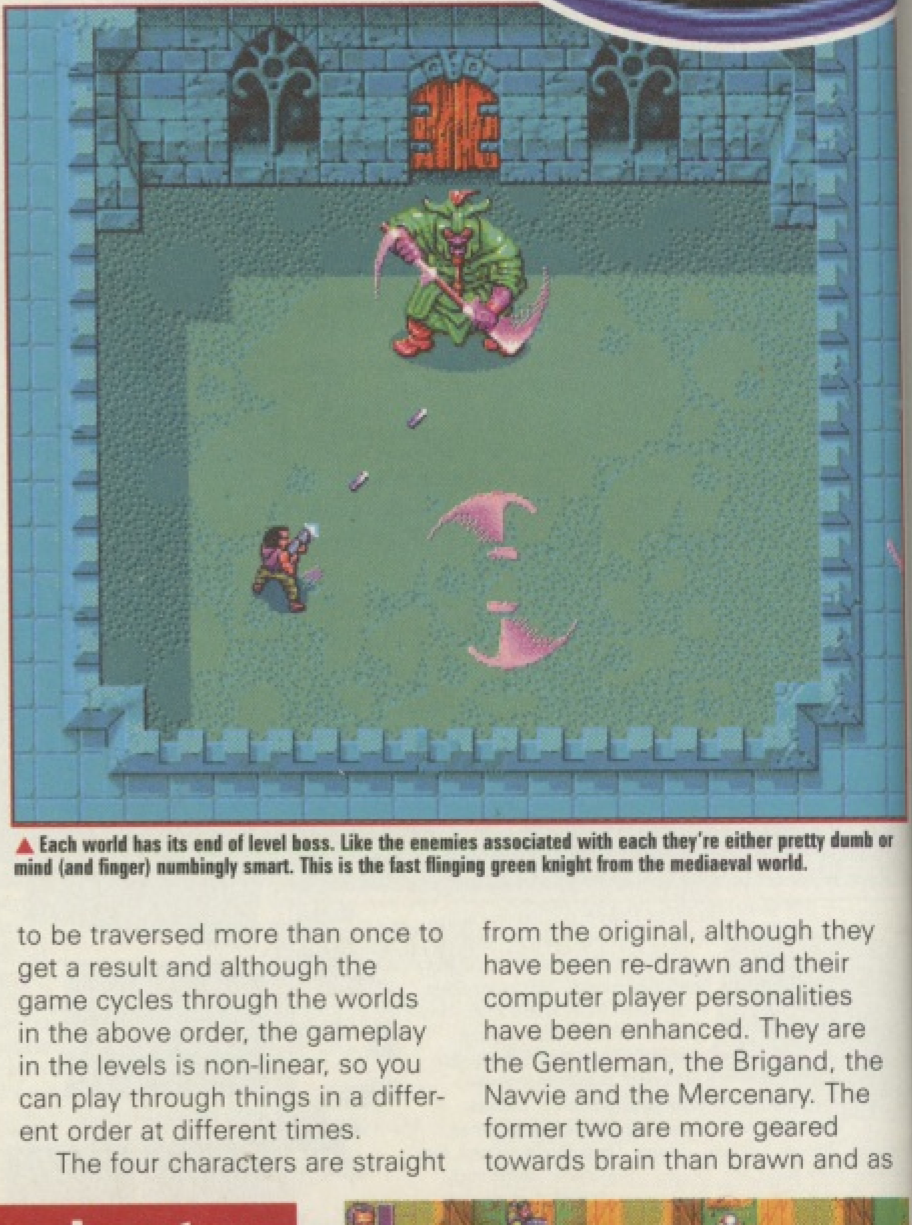
■ DFR: November ■ Developer: The Bit map Brothers © 0171 391 4300

Almost there ... we take an in-depth pre-production look at what could be the best two player game ever.

We've had so many letters and phone calls concerning the Bitmaps' latest Amiga creation and when and if it would ever be ready that we persuaded the boys from Wapping to give us an exclusive sneak preview of the game, now in its final stages of testing. When we originally interviewed the Bitmap Brothers about this one: their last Amiga creation it was planned for release before the Summer, but a series of problems with their big PC product, Z, has delayed it and there are only so many brothers to go around. In fact the game was first scheduled for release at Easter 1995, but you never know these days do you?

To recap on the storyline, Chaos Engine 2 is set in four different worlds where the four main protagonists are acting under orders of the Baron who is trying to reassemble the Chaos Engine. Each of the four worlds holds a set of components for the machine and the levels are built around retrieving these. The four worlds are: future, medieval, Aztec and Chaos – the latter being the mansion from the original. Each world has four levels, some of which are divided up into smaller zones with rooms and mazes to conquer. As the game progresses each map may have to be traversed more than once to get a result and although the game cycles through the worlds in the above order, the gameplay in the levels is non-linear, so you can play through things in a different order at different times.

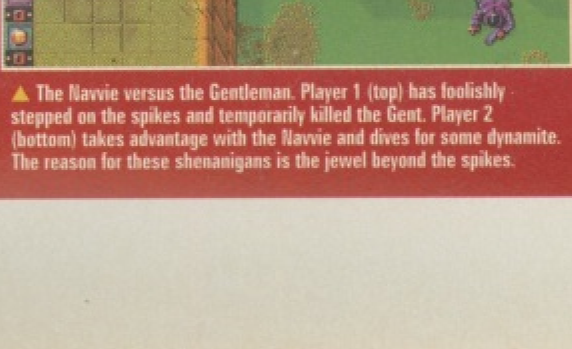
The four characters are straight from the original, although they have been re-drawn and their computer player personalities have been enhanced. They are the Gentleman, the Brigand, the Navvie and the Mercenary. The former two are more geared towards brain than brawn and as



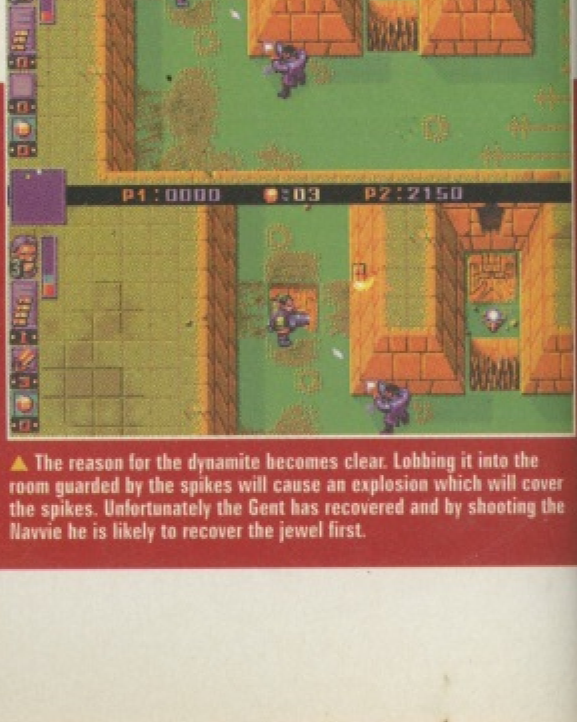
▲ Each world has its end of level boss. Like the enemies associated with each they're either pretty dumb or mind (and finger) numbingly smart. This is the fast flinging green knight from the mediaeval world.



The Aztek adventure



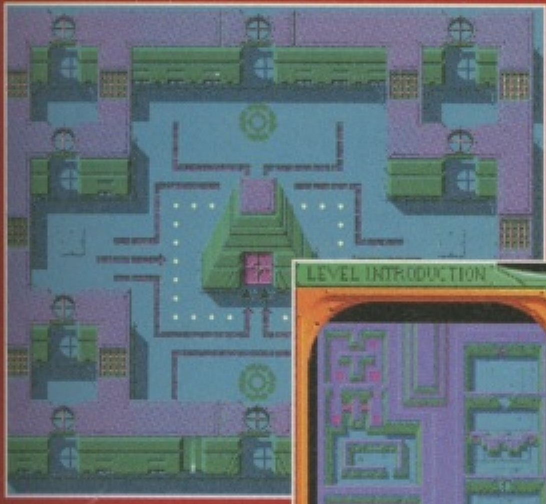
▲ The Navvie versus the Gentleman. Player 1 (top) has foolishly stepped on the spikes and temporarily killed the Gent. Player 2 (bottom) takes advantage with the Navvie and dives for some dynamite. The reason for these shenanigans is the jewel beyond the spikes.



▲ The reason for the dynamite becomes clear. Lobbing it into the room guarded by the spikes will cause an explosion which will cover the spikes. Unfortunately the Gent has recovered and by shooting the Navvie he is likely to recover the jewel first.

Future World

The first world you encounter is future world. This is characterised by robotic enemies, aliens, computer screens and circuit boards. The latter must be collected to please the Baron, who needs them to construct his Chaos Engine all over again. This is the easiest world and is designed in a straightforward manner without too many puzzles to help you get into the game.



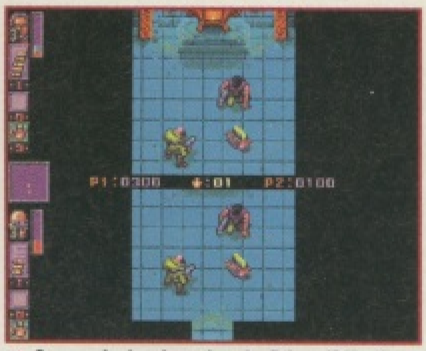


The Baron dispenses advice in the panel on the right of the screen overview map. In the future levels this advice is pretty comprehensive.

Mediaeval capers



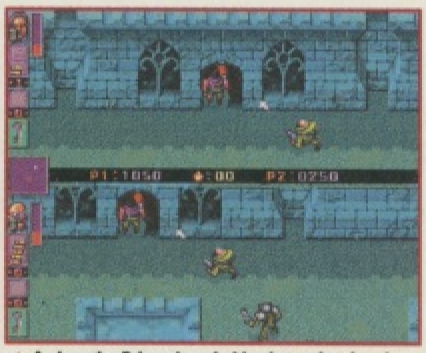
▲ Player 1 (top) as the Brigand is in one of the many rooms dotted around the mediaeval levels, about to pick up a potion. Player 2 (bottom) as the Mercenary fights it out with an armoured skeleton enraged by the madness of chaos. Or something.



▲ Guess who has just shot the Brigand? You'll notice that there are now four neatly lined up potions on the floor. When you shoot a character they will drop keys and objects, which are then ripe for picking up by the opponent.



▲ The Brigand has managed to trump the Mercenary by shooting him and making him drop his key. Although the Mercenary is quite difficult to kill, it looks as though the skeleton in the top right corner may have inadvertently contributed to his downfall.



▲ And so the Brigand seals his victory by charging through the door with the Merc's discarded key. Well almost. As you can see the score is different. The Brigand actually got killed and we had to play the sequence over again for this last shot.

computer players they pose a fast moving, object stealing threat. The latter two are combat orientated characters and will try their best to mow you down at every possible moment.

Intelligence

This is the key difference between Chaos 1 and 2. In the first game you selected another character to help you out, here they are in competition with you. In the one player game the computer character's artificial intelligence gets better as the game continues and their experience increases. On the future level your task is to collect circuit boards for the baron and find keys to get you out at the end of the level. But the computer character has the same aim. It will collect its own objects and then chase you around to get yours. It's frustrating to get to the end of the level and, just as you are about to use the key to activate the exit door, the bloomin' Mercenary shoots you, making you drop the key, then picks it up and steals through the door ahead of you.

The score is totted up on the Baron's totometer according to the amount of enemies you've axed (including the other player) the amount of objects you pick up and whether you get out the exit first. This latter point is important. You might be behind in terms of score but if, like the Mercenary in the example above, you can catch your opponent and clobber him you could sneak a win.

As far as the artificial intelligence is concerned I can confirm from a half day's play that it is indeed efficient. I must admit to a certain amount of scepticism when the complexity of the system was originally explained to me, but on later levels these guys get very smart, dodging bullets the way a human player might and wreaking havoc on your player in a most vindictive manner. A testament to this was when the game was being demonstrated at ECTS one punter demanded to know where the second (human) player was, thinking it was a network game.

Two player

It's not a network game, but adopting a standard, horizontally split screen, two players can play effectively. There is a single screen option for playing against the computer if you so wish. It is in two player mode that Chaos engine shines most. According to Simon 'Duck' Knight of the Bitmaps: "you might not believe this, but we had Super Mario Kart in mind when we devised the two-player game". "The intention was to create something you could delve into at short notice without having to play through the full game."

Thus the two player mode is a



▲ Richard Joseph, pictured at ECTS. The man responsible for music and SFX on Chaos Engine 2.



▲ But the Navvie takes more than one shot to drop, and so the poor Gent loses out again. Here we see the Navvie about to claim the jewel and the Gent running back from where he was chased earlier to ambush his adversary.



▲ Having got the key and most of the jewels our old friend the Navvie has just tried to use the exit, but the Gent has finally succeeded in shooting him, has stolen the key and high-tails it through the exit first.



▲ To no avail. The hapless Gent has been thwarted again. Mr Navvie's superior hoard of jewels sees him as the clear winner once and for all. He who laughs last laughs hardest. By losing, Mr Gentleman only gets a black and white picture. Ho hum.

Medieval World

World number two is medieval world. Here things get a little more difficult, with rooms and teleports featuring heavily. In it you meet robotic armoured skeletons and, if you manage to complete the whole thing you'll have to fight the end of level knight (see picture on page 34). The objects the Baron needs from this world are potions. He's thirsty.



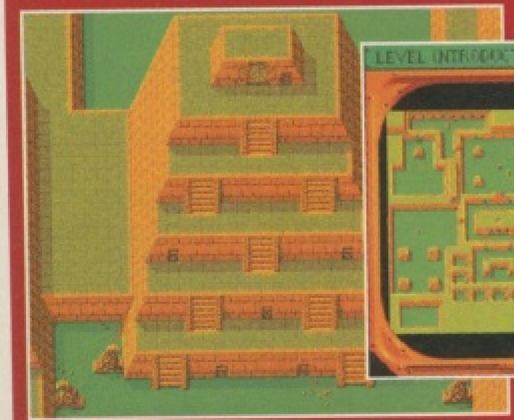


He's getting a bit snappy now, is our old friend the Baron. Do this, do that ... The level map shows the scope for wandering around.



Aztek World

The Bitmaps are obviously keen historians as they've adapted Aztek mythology to their own ends in creating this level. Its enemies include jaguars (large cats, not cars) and the scenery is also against you ... yes you know the saying "the walls have ears"? Well, they've got laser guns in Aztek world and only an invincibility skill can ensure safe passage.



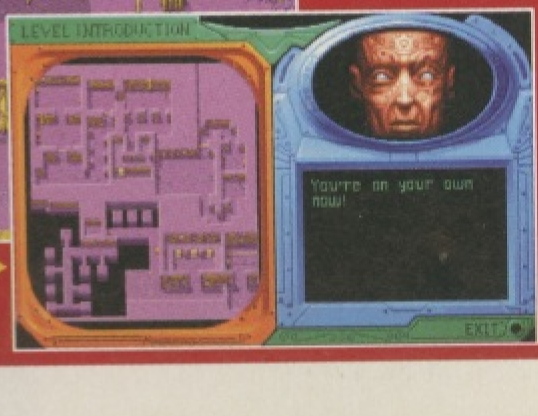


Aztek world has more puzzles and traps than either of the earlier worlds. At this stage the computer characters' AI has become more sophisticated too.

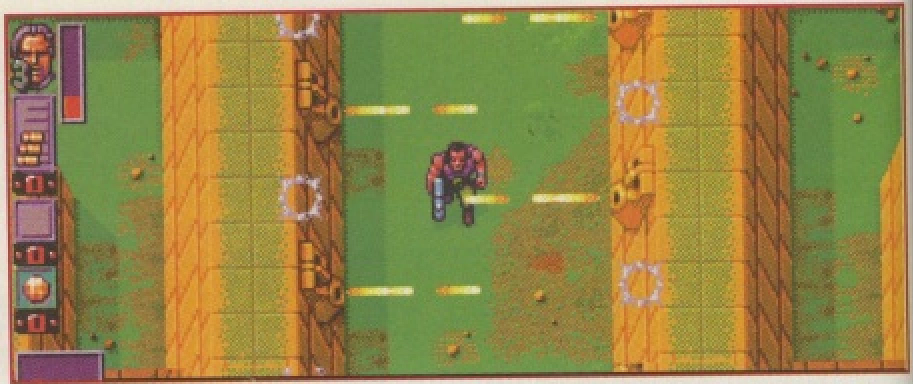
Chaos World

The final world is filled with mysterious hidden rooms and creatures and scenery that can prove lethal. It is heavily overgrown with mutant forms, due to the Chaos Engine's influence. Here you must pick up batteries to complete the Baron's shopping list. Some enemies, like the robotic hands, will be familiar to fans of the original Chaos Engine.



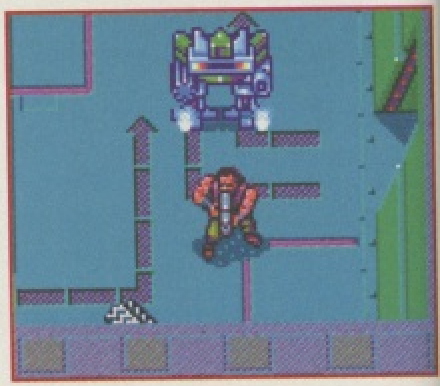


Once onto the Chaos World you're almost on your own. The Baron gives very little advice, and the puzzles are more complex.



challenge game, as opposed to simply a two-player version of the full game. In it you can select from one to four levels to play on each world and then enter into one on one combat to achieve the highest score. Another good reason for this method is that you can't select a human player for the full game and then cheat by playing it through without any (difficult) computer competition.

In many ways the two player mode is like a 2D version of the 'death match' modes in games like Breed 3D, with added competitive incentive to reach the end first.



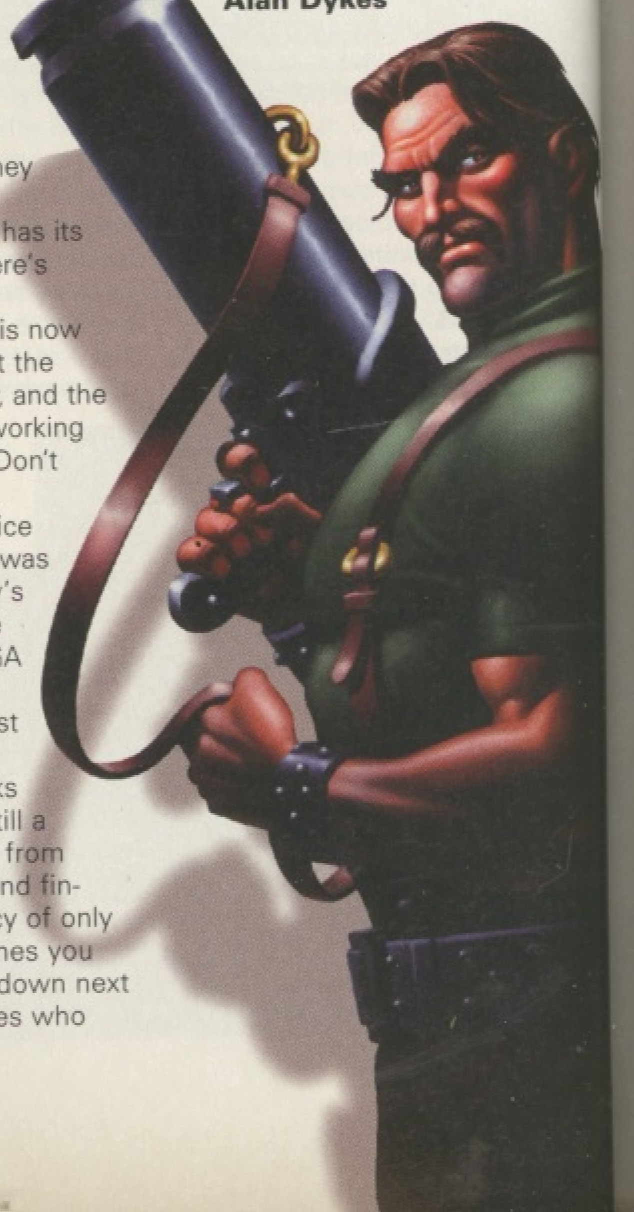


Sounds good

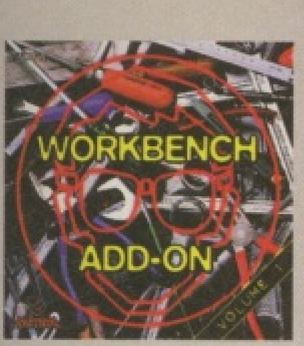
Another advantage of sitting down to play and watch the game being played for an afternoon was a chance to check out the impressive Richard Joseph sound effects and music. Through a decent sound system they add a major amount of atmosphere. Each level has its own theme tune, so there's plenty of variety.

The Chaos Engine 2 is now scheduled for release at the beginning of November, and the Bitmaps are definitely working full steam ahead on it. Don't take their word for it: I sneaked around the office and sure enough there was an Amiga on everybody's desk and Chaos Engine 2 was on them. The AGA version I looked at was fully playable and almost reviewable, but there were a couple of tweaks left which means it's still a couple of weeks away from being signed, sealed and finished. Due to our policy of only reviewing finished games you will get the whole lowdown next month (other magazines who reviewed the game three months ago take note!). The A500 version (yes, there is one) will be delayed longer, but is also due for release in November. ■

Alan Dykes

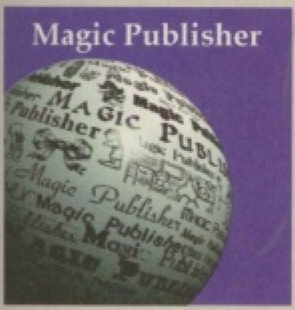


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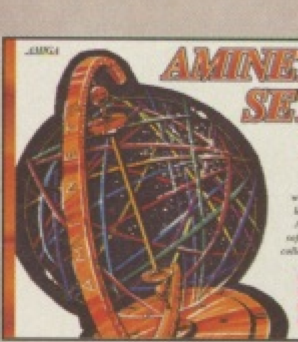
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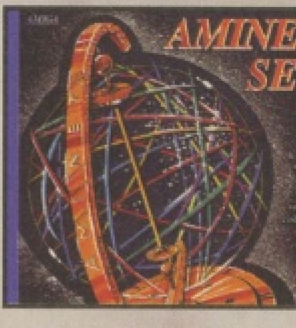
Amiga Developer CD v1.1

The official developer CD from Amiga Technologies contains all the material you need to start developing software forAmiga computers. This includes: The CD32 developer package. In addition to the original five disk set distribution you will find the "Build-CD" CD writer package Packages contributed by 3rd parties: The WBPath and ActionFSSM packages, courtesy of Ralph Babel; The Envoy v2.0 developer kit, courtesy of IAM, Inc.; The INet 225 developer kit, version 2, courtesy of Interworks, Inc.; The Kiskometer package, courtesy of Angela Schmidt; The Enforcer v37.64, courtesy of Mike Sinz. Information in support of forthcoming operating system developments. Additional developer material: BOOPSI gadget and image classes; The AmigaOS 2.04 example code, as part of the original 2.04 Native Developer Kit; The RKM 2.04 code examples; The complete set of registered IFF forms; IFF example and stress test files; All IFF packages released by Commodore-Amiga, Inc., covering 1986 through 1992; The camd v37.1 MIDI developer kit; The SANA-II standard package and developer kit; The Installer v43.1 package. International support material: Sample text using the full ISO-8859-1 character set; Translation guidelines. The updated 3.1 Native Developer Kit: "C" and assembly language header files, linker and runtime libraries; System documentation and tutorial texts; Example code covering the Amiga OS 3.0 and 3.1-features; The NewIFF v39 package; The AmigaGuide and DataTypes documentation and example code. Reference material: The collection of AmigaGuide Volume 1 articles, covering Spring 1987 through January/February 1989; The complete AmigaGuide Volume 2 articles in AmigaGuide format, covering January/February 1990 through March/April 1993; also included are the printable issues in PostScript and PageStream format; Hardware related articles; The Includes & Autodocs in AmigaGuide format. £14.95



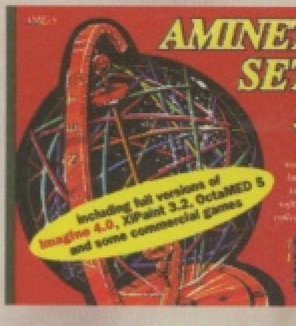
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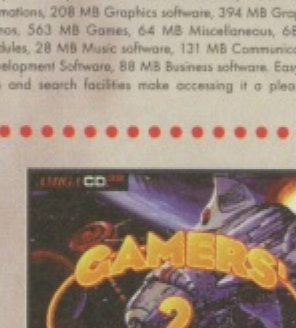
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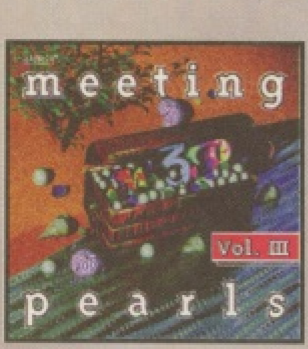
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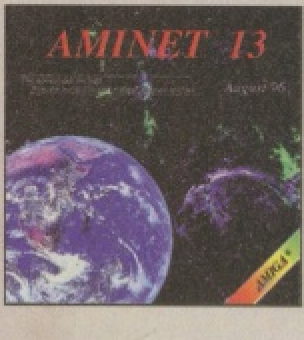
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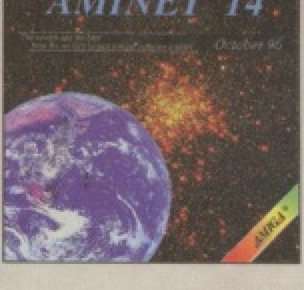
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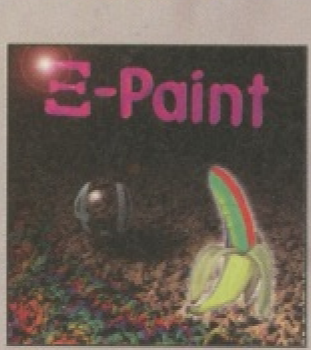
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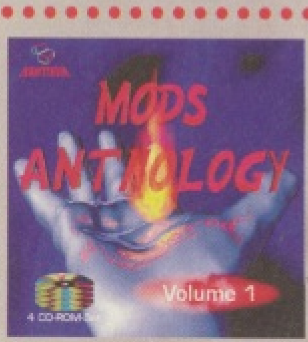
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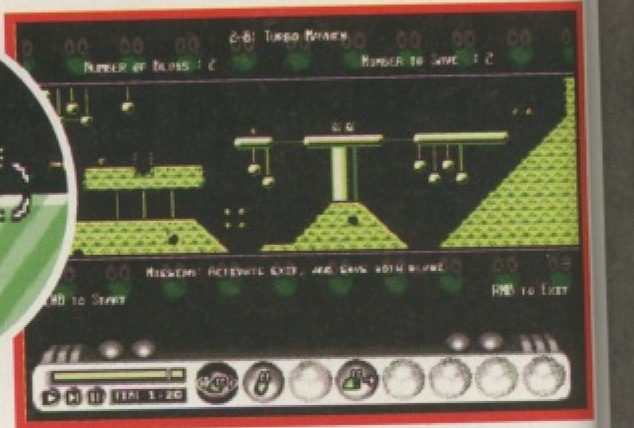
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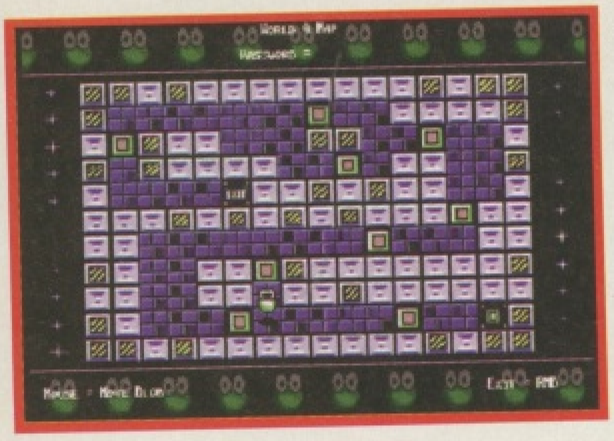




■ Price: £14.99 ■ Publisher: Apex © 01709 890 552

Not the most inspiring name for a game, but then look at Worms and how successful that title was. Blobz steals its gameplay style directly from Lemmings, replacing the suicidal rodents with green nondescript things decked out with tiny eyes. While Lemmings' motivation for suicide is biological, blobs just don't know any better. If they walk into spikes or water they die, but there's no stopping them. A walking they will go, straight into trouble.

As can be seen from the screenshots the landscape types are not as detailed or developed as Lemmings, but Blobz is a Blitz program and so is a little more basic (yes the pun was intended) than the game it's based on. The puzzles themselves are satisfying, if frustrating and they have been well thought out using the various 'skills' which you can assign each Blob. What you can't see from the screenshots is the smooth horizontal scrolling and the neat moving water effects and special touches. While the platforms themselves might look basic, there is a good reason for this: a level designer has been included so you can make as many as you like, and it's simple to use.



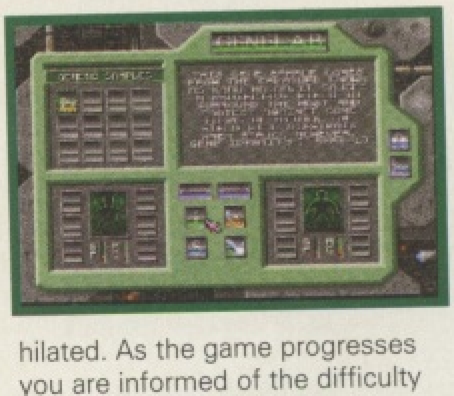
You assign skills to each Blob like Lemmings. First click on one of the skills represented by icons at the bottom of the page, then click on the Blob you want to execute this skill. There is a rocket pack skill, a jumping skill, a reversing skill, a chomping skill (allowing your Blobz to eat horizontally through structures, unless a solid girder is in the way) several directional missile skills and a digging skill. Not all of these are available on each level so, for instance, just when you're comfortable about saving Blobs with the reversing skill, it disappears on the next level. On some levels you have to pick up skill icons as you go along.

The game is based on six worlds each mapped out like a maze and there are 60 levels in total. To get to the end of a world you have to negotiate your way around the maze completing the levels. Although it is possible to get to the exit by completing maybe just 80% of these if you choose the right path, the ones you miss might contain valuable clues about completing later ones. The amount of levels and the increasing difficulty means that this is not a fast game to finish. Add the possibility of infinite custom levels and you have a lot of game. A well recommended purchase. ■

Martin Davies

82%

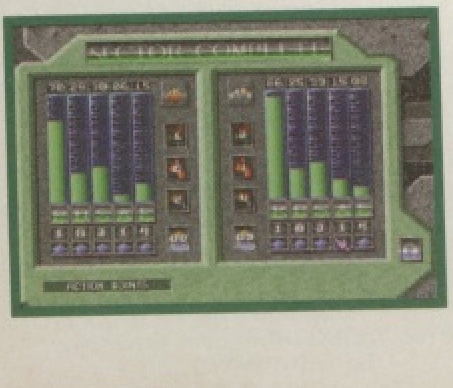
DNA



■ Price: £14.99 ■ Publisher: Applaud Software © 01283 2172708888

The aliens are a coming. Lock up your wives, your children, your pet tortoise and hide. Or you could try and stop the little green men from taking over our world, as we know it, by playing DNA from Applaud Software. It's simple enough to do, it's sort of a two-step with the aliens. You take your turn to try and pulverise them and they in return try to do the same to you. Simple.

The idea of the game is to neutralise each section on a grid. You've got two characters at your disposal: one human and an android. Each one has their own strengths and varying statistics which you can top up with points accrued from each sector neutralised. You can also increase your players' abilities by implanting them with special skills that you've cloned from any deceased aliens. In this aspect DNA is a bit like Microprose's UFO. And you've got a lab where you analyse the various genes that you've picked up and then decide if you want to implant them in your men.



DNA is a game which requires a lot of tactics and advance thinking if you're to avoid being totally annihilated. As the game progresses you are informed of the difficulty factor of each sector. One thing that is frustrating about this game is that one false move and you end up in a situation where you die very rapidly. This normally happens when your weaker player gets trapped by those annoying cannon ball like weapons. Also as your players are linked, if the weaker one dies they both die instantly. You can't predict either where these cannon ball things are going to move to as they sporadically fly about the screen and hammers into which ever player it decides to target. Unfortun- ately, my human player always seemed to die quickly no matter how much I tried to build him up. I also found it a bit annoying that I'd managed to get a long way into the game and then die within seconds thanks to those moving cannon ball things, no matter how much I'd tried to forearm him. Even the quirky reloading phrases like 'groove factor five' didn't manage to cheer me or make me want to plow through all the sectors again. If you're heavy on patience, enjoy tactics and don't mind trial and error too much then try it if not avoid. ■



Lisa Collins

65%

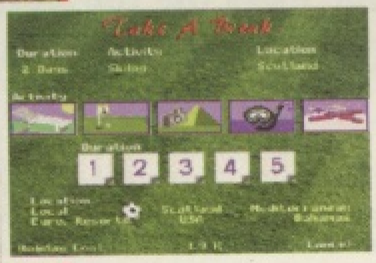
Player Manager 2

■ **Price: £16.99** ■ **Publisher: Hit Squad © 0161 832 6633**

Back in 1995 this version of Player Manager was very well received. It had great ancestry in one of the most popular footy management sims ever and as an update it almost managed the impossible: a sequel which does its predecessor proud. Similar in style to On the Ball and Audiogenic's Super League Manager, you can participate in the games you've planned using the Kick Off 3 game engine included.

You start off in the second division rather than the third, which makes getting used to the routine easier. So many games expect you to manage upwards from the third division, which can often be difficult and off-putting. PM2 is more accessible in this way. There are 16 teams from each of the four divisions included and you must create a team capable of winning promotion to the Premier League as well as joining in the fun in Europe. Competition is provided by three other managers who can be either computer or human controlled.





As usual your tasks will include training, dealing on the transfer market, dealing with sponsors and devising tactics (PM2 has a great tactics editor). Added realism is provided by the appearance of Alan Hansen, but as in real life, he can be a pain in the neck at times.

The main management menu is represented by a side cutaway of the clubhouse building which allows you to access the various areas essential to the smooth running of the club. Inevitably much action (if that is the right word) takes place in the manager's office where transfer deals and player purchasing takes place. Unfortunately PM2 is not the most informative game in this area and it can sometimes be confusing just how much money you're spending on players.

After the highlights of the management section actually playing the game in the KO engine is a bit of a disappointment. It's not the best arcade footy game by any means. But at least using the advanced tactical editor in the management section you can invent those wild plays you sometimes wish your favourite real life team would adopt.

This is one to watch out for. Anco subsequently produced an AGA version with allegedly improved graphics. They almost ruined it with superficial cosmetic stunts. This version is much more worthwhile, and now cheaper too. It falls in the middle between the two pillars of footy games: Sensible World Of Soccer and Premier Manager 3.

Less fun but more management than the former, and less stats and depth than the latter. If you really like football management it won't disappoint though. ■

Martin Davies

86%

Ruffian

■ Price: £14.99 ■ Publisher: Ruffian Software © 01606 835241



▲ Fruit and potion pick ups ahoy.

No you haven't stepped into a time warp. And things aren't so bad on the Amiga games scene that we're now randomly picking out old games that we reviewed months back. What am I talking about? For those of you who don't remember, we reviewed this platform game back in April 95 when it was planned for release from Grandslam. However, unfortunately, it never saw the light of day so now the creators of the game , Ruffian Software have decided to release it so we thought it worth a second look.



I'm glad that we are going to eventually see Ruffian in shops. Not because there is little software out there (well that helps) but because Ruffian is a good game. In my original review I said the only real thing that grated on my nerves was the music and I'm glad to say that this has been sorted out and it is not nearly as offensive now. Another change is that your little cheeky little hero no longer moons at you when he gets bored, though I kinda miss that.

Apart from those changes the game is the more or less the same as the original. Set in the jungle you've got a set time limit and energy levels as you leap from branch to branch and explore the hidden depths of the jungle in your aim to free the trapped pixies in that level.

Freeing the pixies is not a very dignified affair. Instead of walking up to them and releasing them somehow from the bubble-like substance they are trapped in you've got to gob at them instead. In these days of safe sex I don't know if that much exchange of bodily fluids is advisable but it's all for a good cause.



Ruffian can be tricky in places and as the game progresses, it becomes harder. You get more and more pixies to free and the places that they are hidden in become more difficult to access. You got to use a bit of forward thinking for these harder levels. For example, in some places you can use falling monkeys to catapult you to difficult-to-reach platforms. You also get a little help if you want to in the shape of 'helping hands' which point you in the direction of any unfreed pixies and exits. Extra energy and spitting power points are available in the shape of various assorted fruits and potions. Luckily there is also a password system so you don't have to go through the easier levels once you've completed them.

In all, Ruffian is still a good game. It's hard in place but it playable. Platform fans won't be disappointed and neither will anyone else looking for a decent game. ■

Lisa Collins

84 %



V A M P

Adventure Helpline

I've been searching through my mailbag for some things to tempt you with. Here are the tastier ones. Enjoy.

The Secret of Monkey Island

I can't open the sealed trunks in the hold on the ship to Monkey Island. I used the rope as a fuse on the cannon and used the gunpowder in the nozzle but nothing happened. I know that I can use the pot from the kitchen as a helmet, so I can be fired off this ship onto another one, but when does another ship pass by?

Thomas Rutherford, Kirkcaldy.

The reason you can't open the sealed trunks is because they are sealed! And the reason you can't blast yourself off one ship onto another is because it's Monkey Island that you want to be blasted onto. Here is the complete sequence to get off the ship.

Get the Jolly Roger flag from the mast. Go down into the hold, get the rope, open the chest and then take the wine. Get the gunpowder then go to the galley and get the pot. Open the cupboard and get the cereal. Open the cereal and take the prize. Go to your cabin and get the ink, then use your prize (which is a key) to open the cupboard. Inside is a recipe and cinnamon sticks. Go to the galley and use the cinnamon sticks, the breath mints, the Jolly Roger, the ink, the fine wine, the rubber chicken, the gunpowder and the cereal on the cooking pot. Things will turn nasty for a moment, then you can use the business card which you got from Stan on the fire. Pick up more gunpowder then return to the upper deck. Monkey Island will now be in sight and you can fix up the cannon to blast yourself off the ship.

Simon the Sorcerer

How do you get on top of the Dragon's Cave?

Colin Lowery, Dublin.

Very quietly I would think, because you don't want to wake him. Before you go climbing anywhere use the cold remedy on him to make sure he is fast asleep. You can pick up this handy medicine from the Druid's house. Once the dragon is dozing, grab the fire extinguisher and leave.

Outside the cave you can combine the rope from the Blacksmith's Forge with the hook from the Mine. Now use the hook on the boulder at the top of cave entrance to climb up.

Operation Stealth

My girlfriend and I have been thrown overboard with rocks tied to out feet. How do I escape?

R. Eates, Sheffield.

That's typical! You want to know how 'you' can escape. What about the poor girl? Well the answer depends on how confident you are about yourself. I mean, would you feel a sissy wearing a bracelet? If you are worried about it, just remember that you are supposed to be an incredibly sexy secret agent and no one will think anything of it.

Provided that when you changed your dollars into the local currency you remembered to do the action twice, you should have enough money to buy a bracelet from the guy on the beach. Wear the bracelet, then just before you are chucked overboard you must 'Operate' the bracelet. Once you are in the water, wait until you almost reach the ocean bed, then 'Operate' the bracelet again to free yourself. Swim towards the girl and 'Operate Girl' to free her. Whether you're really sexy or not, somehow I don't think she'll be in a hurry to go out with you again.

Future Wars

To try and escape from the prison I used the key to remove the grille but I don't know what to do next. In my inventory I have: a lance, newspaper, blowtorch and documents. Am I missing anything?

Mark Cosgrove, Neath.

Yes. This part of the game always stumps players, because the answer is really unfair. What you are missing is a gas grenade which is nearly impossible to find. Do you remember when you rescued the fair damsel from the glass dome she was imprisoned in? The grenade is to the right of the glass cylinder. Once you have it, you can put the grenade through the grille and then cover the hatch with the newspaper to prevent the gas seeping back into your cell.

Police Quest III

I have recently phoned the Sierra automatic helpline for help with Police Quest III, Day 4. It said that I had to get a note (from my message basket) to go to court, but I don't receive such a note, instead I have to go straight to the murder scene. It also said that I have to get a tracking device from the technician AND it said that I have to see Marie at the end of the day, but the game takes me straight home after Morales has made a phone call.

Is there someone that I need to talk to, or something I need to do in one of the earlier days?

Adam Noon, Thorngumbald.

I have double checked the solution and Sierra are correct. As most guys don't know what day of the week it is, shall we double check with you? Day two began with the boss ringing you at home. Day three began with you at home, then going to work in the Homicide Office. You pick up a memo from your basket which has the address 325 South Second Street on it. You ended the day at Oak Tree Mall and then you went back to the station, then home.

Day four begins at home, then you leave the house and go to the station. Go to the Homicide Office and there is a note on your desk. It is a court summons. Take the note, then go to the third floor where you can pick up a tracking device from the Head Technician. You'll note that my solution says that the note is on the desk and not in your message tray. I can't recall if I specified the desk deliberately, or if I meant the message tray, but take it from me, that message is somewhere on that desk.

Monkey Island II

How do I get the monkey from the bar? I've tried offering the monkey my banana, but the barkeeper tells me to get lost.

David Ellams, Borehamwood.

What a lousy technique for picking up people in bars. It's easy really. You simply attach your banana to the metronome and as it ticks from side to side the monkey will watch it until it becomes hypnotised. You'll now be able to pick it up and take it home with you. ■

If you've got a little problem with your favourite Role Playing Game and would like Vamp to help you out, drop her a line at CU Amiga Magazine, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.



FINAL THOUGHT FOR ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN LET DOWN BY A MAN BEFORE: 'TIME WOUNDS ALL HEELS'.

Snip tips



by Matt Broughton, Games Consultant

Earwig-o again! More cheats, more codes, more tips. What incredible value for money! Matt Broughton will be your driver today. HOLD TIGHT!

FIRE AND ICE
Graftgold

Matthew Belshaw from Lowestoft has discovered a hidden goody in this excellent Graftgold classic. On Green Run (level 2) go to the top of the slope and use a snowflake (ie down and fire). This will reveal a staircase made up from blocks marked with a question mark. Climb this and, at the top, jump straight up to get warped to a further stage. Try this in other levels as somehow (don't ask me how folks!) you'll find yourself with infinite lives! What an excellent cheat! Ta mate.

MORTAL KOMBAT 2
Acclaim

Marcelino Salcedo of The Netherlands (gosh we go all over the place, don't we?) has a nifty little code to remind us about that accesses a diagnostics screen that allows you to choose opponents, change time, and... well, tons of things really! Just go to the options menu and type the code **ZEDWEB.** If the cheat doesn't work first time, just keep entering **ZEDWEB.** Ace!

DIGGERS CD32
Millennium

Ah, now here's a game that wasted many a happy (if pointless) hour! Well Adam Shailer has a decent little cheat that allows you to collect tons of jewels without having to go anywhere! Dig a tunnel horizontally at least five squares across. Now dig down one square, then up diagonally until you're back on the level of your original tunnel. Now dig down the SMALLER part of the slope to remove it (you should end up with something that looks like a castle's battlements (you know, ramparts, that sort of thing) anyway ... you can now place a digger inside these 'trenches' and



get them to dig diagonally up in the direction of the slope. They won't actually go anywhere, but will keep digging, miraculously finding jewels regularly! Crazy, huh?

FRONTIER
Gametek

Not really a cheat, just some damn good advice from 'Mr Nice Guy' of Herefordshire.

Try this: Start at Lave and buy a Viper Defence craft, along with a beam laser from upgrades. Also buy an automatic pilot, four homing missiles and atmospheric shielding. Now ask permission for launching (and don't forget some fuel!). Your objective is Zaonce, but don't go there yet. Jump to Tionisla and THEN on to Zaonce. Head for the planet Industry, go to the space station, and check out upgrades. You'll find that you're in a pretty tasty position to progress further (you'll see what I mean when you get there!)

XTREME RACING
Guildhall Leisure

Tobias Caplen of Hampshire would like to share with us all a handy cheat for accessing the three tracks without having to win the three levels of cup races. Type **IDKFA** in any of the menu screens and the screen with all three tracks on will flash (type it in again to deactivate the cheat).



▲ To get to the three tracks in Xtreme Racing without having to win the three levels of cup races type IDKFA in any of the menu screens.

ALIEN BREED 3D II
Team 17

Another cheat from Tobias comes in the form of a cheat of sorts that allows you to build up a bit of ammo supply without too much effort. When the game has first loaded, collect both ammo boxes in the first room and then press the Esc key. Select to 'Play Game' again and repeat the process until you've clocked up enough ammo to complete the level without running too low. Handy, non?

CIVILISATION
MicroProse

An excellent discovery by Paul Hendrikx from The Netherlands (again!) means that you can now design your own worlds using a package like DPaint V! Load into DPaint a file from the Civilisation directory called 'CIVMAP.lbm'. You'll see a map of Earth in the left corner so save this somewhere else. Now you can draw your own world using the following colour sequence:

Light green = Grassland
Light blue = Jungle
Dark blue = Oceans
Brown = Plains
Purple = Mountains
White = Arctic
Dark green = Forest
Medium blue = River
Yellow = Desert
Red = Hills
Grey = Tundra

Also: If you save your game before entering 'an advanced tribe' you can load it again if barbarians come out or if you want a new city, unit, or new invention. Cool or what. ■

Time gentlemen

Sorry gang, but please drink up and LEAVE! Keep your tips coming in though, and don't forget that there's (eventually) a free Hit Squad game for every tip printed. Don't forget to let me know what machine you've got or you simply shan't get a prize ALL RIGHT! Be seeing you ...

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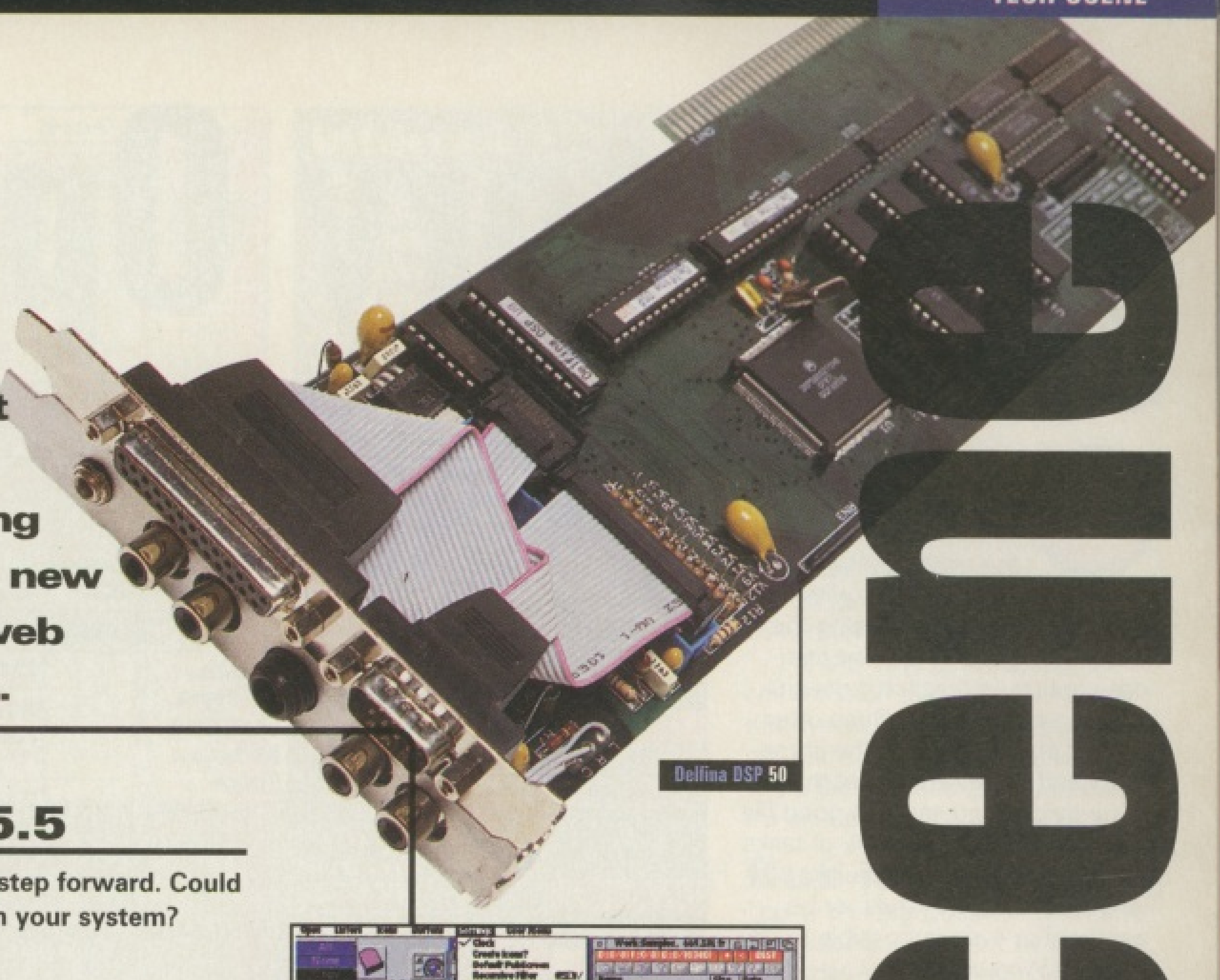
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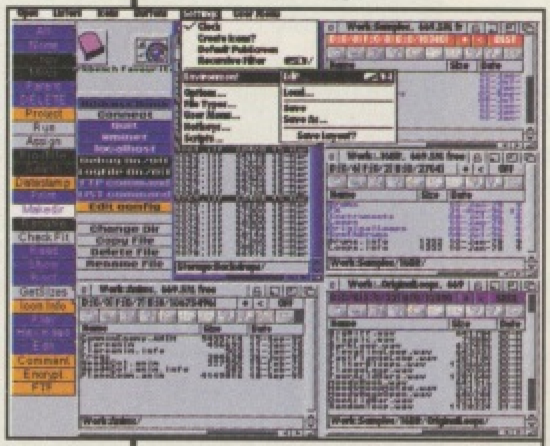
Tech Scene



As promised, we've brought you the first review of the new Delfina DSP card, along with Directory Opus 5.5, a new IDE solution and a tough web browser head-to-head test.



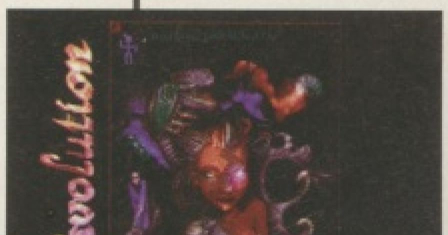
Delfina DSP 50



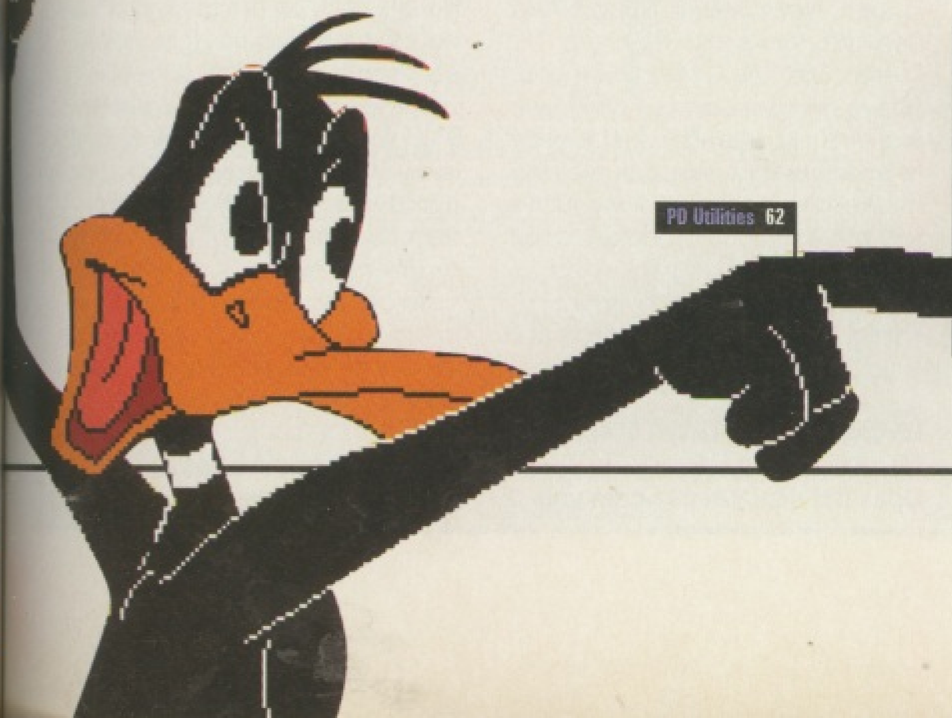
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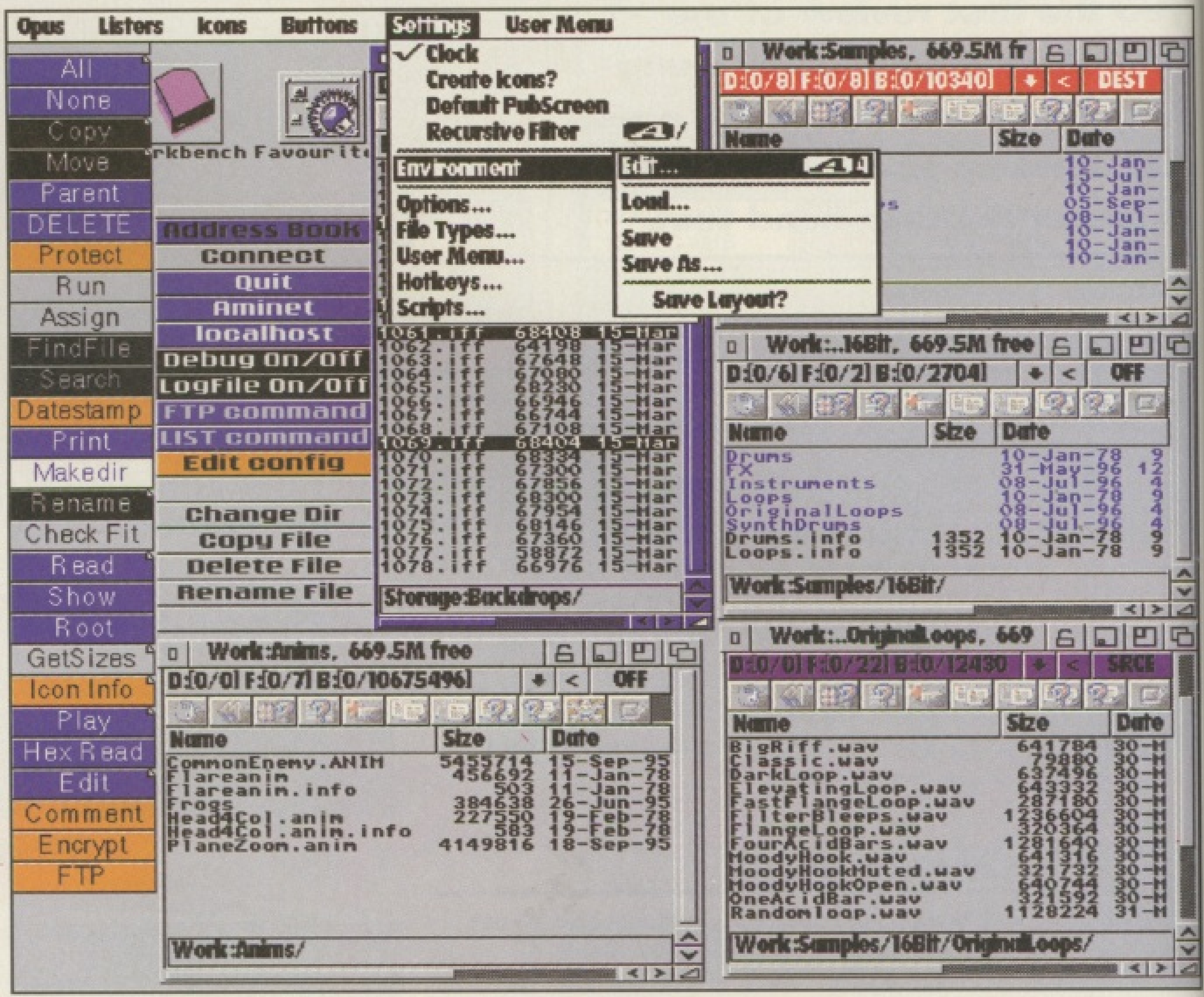
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Directory Opus 5.5

■ Price: £49.99 ■ Developer: GP Software ■ Supplier: Wizard Developments © 01322 527 800



Everyone needs a file manager, or so it seems. While in theory the more technically-minded should be happy with the Shell, with Workbench being the choice for those who want the easy option, in practice it doesn't always work like that. Quite often neither option has both the immediacy and the power to get the job done quickly and easily. A good file manager makes light work of tasks that would otherwise require lengthy Shell commands, or be awkward or even impossible to do with the Workbench.

Programs such as CLImate and SID pioneered the file manager theme in the Amiga's early days, but it wasn't long before Directory Opus appeared and promptly left them for dust. Ever since, Directory Opus has been a regular fixture on just about every serious Amiga user's hard drive.

All change

When version 5.0 appeared in early 1995 it took a major detour from the established file manager format. Previously file managers consisted of two fixed-position 'listers' and a bank of function buttons. Opus 5 threw the whole thing wide open with windows and button banks that could be moved, resized and configured until the cows came home, even going as far as to herald itself as a complete Workbench replacement.

Breaking away from its familiar format gave it freedom to introduce a range of powerful new features but also had the side effect of alienating some existing Opus fans, since it was no longer as simple to use in its default set up. Since then GP Software have had time to digest the reactions from its worldwide userbase and take Opus on to the next stage.

Gadgets galore

If you never used version 5 you could be forgiven for thinking you'd loaded up the wrong software. In contrast to version 4 and below, 5.5 starts up with a worryingly empty screen. During the installation process you are given countless configuration choices, which include the option to copy all the 'left out' drive icons from your Workbench onto the Opus screen. If you do choose to do so, you end up with a Opus screen that looks and acts remarkably like Workbench itself. Double clicking an icon opens a window, but unlike Workbench, the window takes the form of a lister containing a sorted directory of the drive. An icon strip runs along the top each lister. These icons are used to process any selected files in that lister. The icons include functions for Select All Files, Select By Pattern, New Drawer, Copy, Move, Rename, Move with Rename, Delete, Edit, View, Play and more. Above the icon strip is a MUI-style menu launcher which can be used as an alternative selection method for the icon functions, along with a few more to boot. These are duplicated on the button bank which also houses some of the more advanced functions such as archive extraction and file searches.

Seems familiar

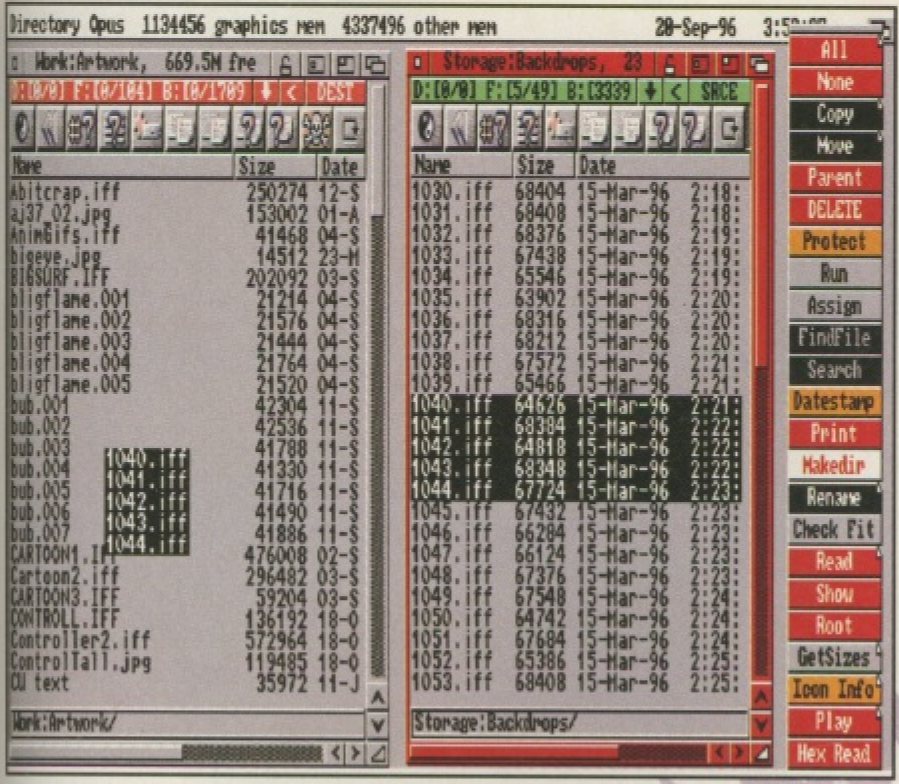
There's a strange familiarity about Opus 5.5 that creeps up on you almost subconsciously. While at first it might seem a bit over complicated and disorganised, before long it all starts to make sense. It takes elements of the Workbench, such as drive icons and the facility to drag and drop files from here to there, alongside the button banks and listers of old.

If you move the pointer to an empty part of the Opus screen and double click on the background, a new lister opens up right there, containing a list of all currently mounted drives and assigns for your selection. The ability to have more than two listers open at once introduces a complication that never occurs on a simple dual-lister file manager. It's no longer a case of one window acting as a source and the other as the destination. Now each lister can be defined as a source or a destination, not *the* source or destination. This is an important point to note, because it means you can have

What's new?

Here's a selection of the new features that have appeared since version 5.0.

- **New Icon Action mode**
- **Built-in FTP lister mode**
- **Borderless button banks**
- **Cybergraphics RTG compatible**
- **Automatic file-type creator**
- **Font viewer**
- **Version field available in listers**
- **New improved clipboard support**
- **Backdrops in listers**
- **Internal CLI window**
- **New internal and ARexx commands**



Internet FTP Module

One of the most useful new features in Opus 5.5 is the FTP module. This allows you to hook up to an FTP site via the Internet (assuming you have a TCP/IP stack up and running) and access it from a normal Opus lister. This makes light work of downloading files. You can even have a number of FTP listers open at the same time, all downloading or uploading specified files at the same time.

multiple sources and multiple destinations. For example, you could select a bunch of files from various drives and copy them all to one or more new locations in a single click of the Copy button.

However, copying files is just the tip of the iceberg. Opus 5.5 is packed full of configuration options, allowing the system to be customised beyond all recognition. Once ARexx is brought into the equation it becomes a highly flexible and powerful tool, capable of adapting to all kinds of specialist jobs. Knocking up automated functions and scripts to be launched from the button bank should present few problems for Shell-heads or anyone with a good understanding of ARexx. The menus are laden with one option after another to let you change this, add that or remove something else.

Twiddly bits

Frankly, if you want something that's going to make your life easier when it comes to simple work-a-day jobs, you'll probably find this all too much to take in. Maybe GP Software could have renamed it when it got to version 5.0 to reflect the many changes and additions. Using Opus 5.5 to simply shovel a few files around is like using a combine harvester to mow the lawn.

My main criticism of the program is that it's not easier to use right from the start. It would be nice if it was simpler to select one of a few basic set-ups and screen layouts before you dive into the menus and start twiddling all the knobs.

For those with the inclination to set up a throbbing multi-faceted file processing system, Opus 5.5 is a godsend. The FTP features are excellent and will probably be the most popular of the new additions. Obviously any seasoned users of version 5.0 won't have the rather steep learning curve to deal with, so in that case it's really a matter of figuring out which of the new features to use. Those with an extremely good memory will recall we rated version 5.0 at a big fat 'go buy it now' kind of 95% mark.

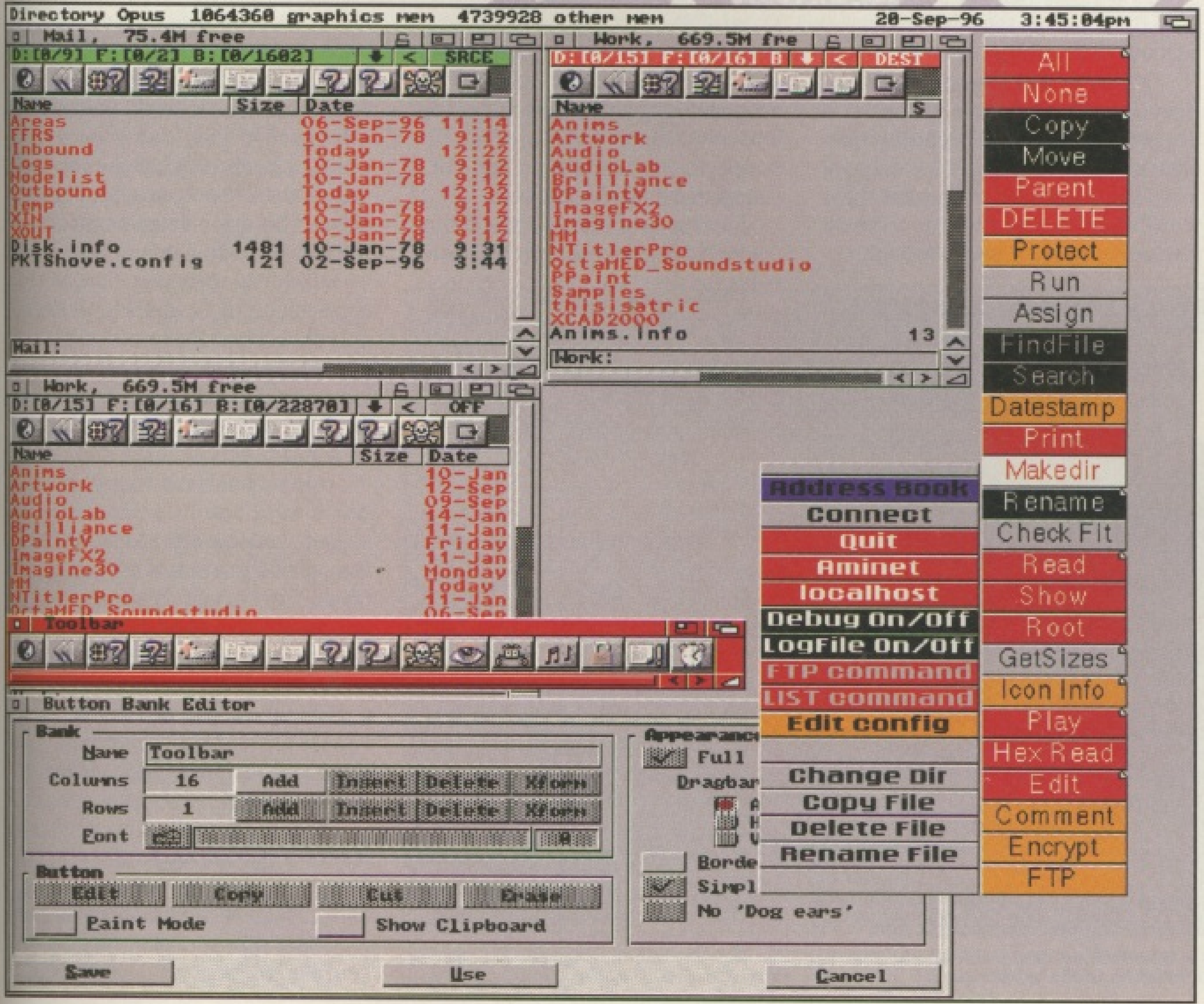
For the sake of continuity we could match that score here, but that would be the easy option. It's not perfect, it won't be to everyone's taste, but in the right hands it's an incredibly powerful tool.

But is it Opus?

This is the big question for many Opus users. Should it ever have been developed to this degree of complexity? On the one hand you can enter commands directly into the Shell if you want 'quick and dirty' control over your files, and if you want simple file shovelling, there's Opus 4 and a handful of other similarly capable file managers available from the public domain. Sometimes it seems the effort required to set-up Opus 5.5 for specific tasks could be better spent writing your own DOS scripts or jacking straight into the Shell. Re-configuring previous versions of Opus was a fairly straight forward affair, but things have a tendency to get rather complicated when you dig into the main power features of Opus 5.5.

Directory Opus 5.5 is without doubt a very powerful system but it's not necessarily going to be what every Opus user wants as an upgrade. ■

Tony Horgan



DIRECTORY OPUS 5.5

A500 · A500+ · A600 · A1200 · A1500 · A2000 · A3000 · A4000

system requirements:
2Mb RAM, hard drive, OS2 or above

ease of use......................70%
It's not that easy to use and is the program's weakest aspect but it gets easier.

performance......................90%
Amazingly versatile and overflowing with features for the more adventurous.

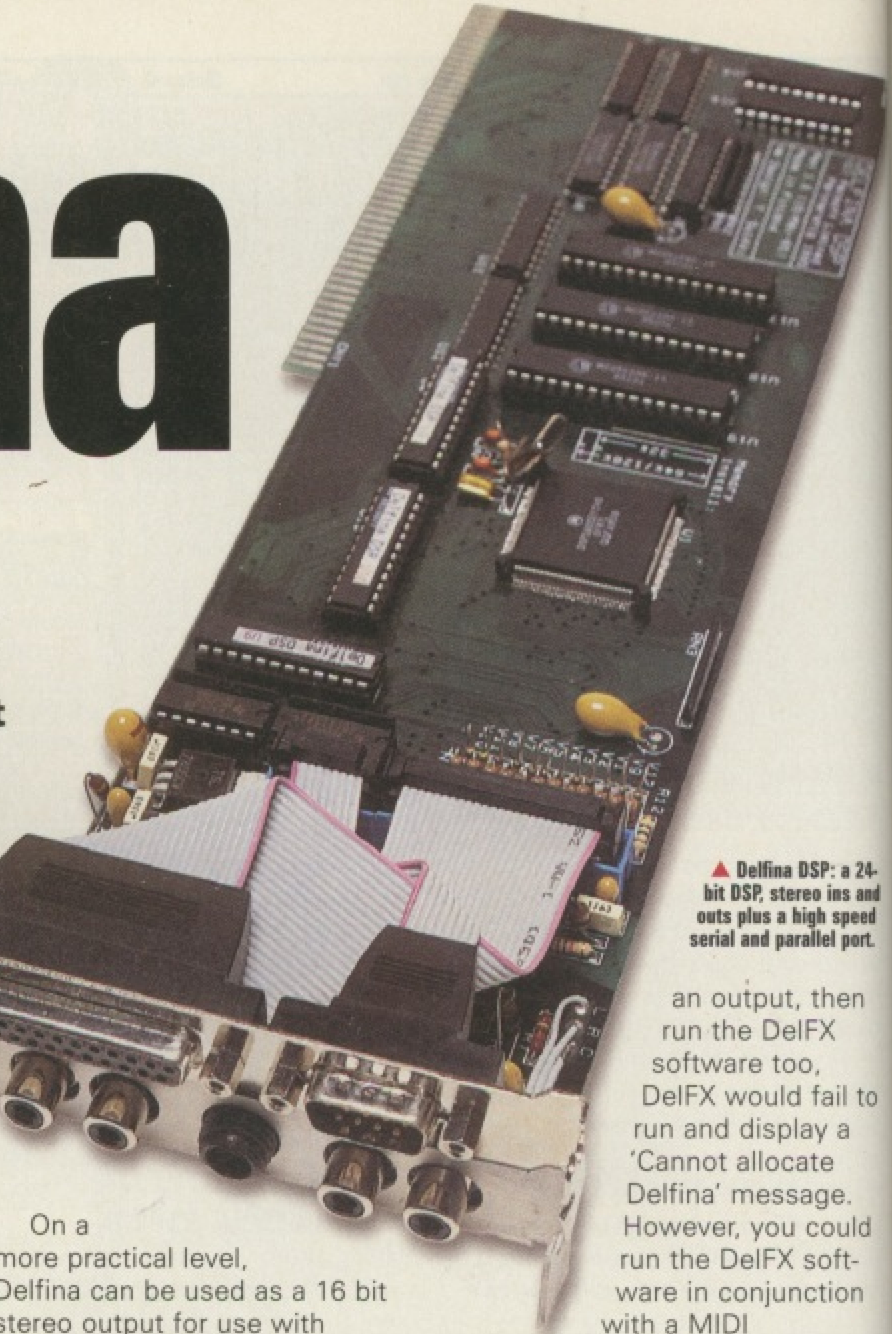
value for money..............80%
Sensibly priced, with a good ring-bound 260 page manual.

OVERALL
Much more than a directory tool.
87%

Delfina

■ Price: £400 ■ Developer and Supplier: Petsoff (see box out for contact details)

A new sound card has arrived with its own onboard 24-bit DSP chip. Could it be the ultimate audio upgrade?



▲ Delfina DSP: a 24-bit DSP, stereo ins and outs plus a high speed serial and parallel port.

Back in the April 96 issue of CU Amiga Magazine we reviewed the Toccata from MacroSystem, a fairly simple 16-bit stereo record and replay system on a Zorro card, which we rated at 82%. Until now that's been one of the very few available options for those looking to upgrade from the Amiga's 8-bit audio limitations.

Now, from the land that brought you OctaMED (that's Finland by the way) comes a new sound card with better specs than ever.

24-bit DSP

Whereas Toccata could sample and replay 16-bit stereo samples, Delfina goes one better by adding a DSP chip to the equation. The star of the show is the Motorola digital signal processor which sits bang in the middle of the card, happily processing a continuous stream of stereo sound with 24-bit bandwidth in realtime. It would seem that the main aim of Delfina is to act as a realtime effects processor, but that's not all it can do. Aside from the DSP functions, the AD/DA convertor can be used to sample and replay 16-bit stereo sound.

Although there's no sampling software as such, the output of the effects processing software can be routed to a file, which will result in a sample. Likewise the input can be switched to a file in order to replay a sample.



▲ Each part of the Delfina realtime effects software can be controlled from a number of sliders and buttons. You can save out as many of your own customised effects settings as you like for future use.

On a more practical level, Delfina can be used as a 16 bit stereo output for use with OctaMED SoundStudio, the MIDI sequencer Dominator (a non-MIDI version of which comes with Delfina) and as an output for any other audio software which supports the relatively new AHI retargetable audio system.

Two pairs of stereo RCA phono sockets are mounted on the back plate for line level input and output. There's also a 1/4 inch jack socket which can be switched between line and mic level input, plus stereo mini jack socket for headphones output. An additional plate can be attached to the card which offers alternative parallel and serial ports. There's currently no driver available for the parallel port, although this is under development and should be released soon.

A driver for the serial port is supplied, enabling you to use this instead of the Amiga's slow built-in serial port, allowing faster access times from serial devices, particularly modems.

Practical uses

Unfortunately you can't control Delfina from two applications at once, so if you tried to run SoundStudio with Delfina as an output, then run the DelFX software too, DelFX would fail to run and display a 'Cannot allocate Delfina' message. However, you could run the DelFX software in conjunction with a MIDI sequencer, or even a tracker using standard Amiga samples and feed any or all of those sounds through the Delfina effects. Because the effects processing is carried out by the DSP rather than the Amiga's CPU, this should be quite feasible even on the slowest Amigas.

Using the direct to disk recording options of SoundStudio, you could also use Delfina to add effects to previously recorded loops from hard drive, which could then be used to build up a new module.

This would have the advantage of allowing you to process specific parts independently, and also the resulting module would use fewer tracks, which would mean you could probably use the 'smoothing' option in realtime to remove the bulk of the mixing noise (see the SoundStudio review in the September 96 issue of CU Amiga Magazine for more details).

Sampling

This is the first sampler or sound card I've seen that doesn't come with some kind of sampling and sample editing software. Petsoff

Delfina FX

The Delfina hardware comes complete with its own realtime effects software. This is a very neat little MUI application that gives you access to five main types of effects, plus a noise gate and a dry/wet balance control to adjust the relative amount of the original and the affected sound. Each effect has its own collection of windows containing the relevant sliders and controls. A selection of effects settings are supplied with the software, including example set-ups for echo, chorus, distortion and flange effects. You're free to save out your own settings too, which for example could be especially handy for storing time-critical delays for use with specific projects.

Although the effects work in stereo, in that both left and right channels are processed and passed to the left and right outputs, you don't get independent processing for each channel, nor is there any cross talk between the channels, so what you get is a dual monophonic output from the effects chain, which is then mixed with the true stereo sound coming from the pass-through. That means you can't use the effects to add stereo movement and ping-pong effects to either a stereo or a mono sound source, which is a little disappointing. Maybe this will be addressed in future revisions of the DelFX software.

The effect types available are compression, distortion, delay, phaser and equaliser. The signal is passed through any or all of these in that order, with the noise gate sitting at the front of the chain. Let's take a closer look at how they all work.

Noise gate. This mutes the input of the card when there's no incoming sound or when the incoming volume level is below a specified figure. This is designed to stop interference being picked up and passed through the effects chain during silent parts of the incoming signal.

Compression. Although the documents call this effect compression it's really limitation. It prevents the 'clipping' distortion that would occur if the input was too loud. It does this by scaling down the sound wave before it's passed onto the rest of the effects. Full compression also does the opposite, scaling up quiet parts of the sound to fit the available headroom, but this is not available here.

Distortion. Designed to add grit and fuzz to sounds, the distortion effect reverses the good work of compressor by amplifying the sound to clipping point. It also uses an unlinear amplifier, which is a more complex type of amplification that injects more character into the effect.

Delay. This is where most of the work is done on reverb and echo effects. The time between the echoes can be altered from very slight (for Robocop speech) to very long. There's also a feedback slider which controls how much of the echo is passed back through the delay.

Phaser. By merging two copies of the same sound, offset from one another at constantly varying degrees, the phaser can create a wide range of effects from subtle 'whooshing' movements to fat choruses to sub-aqua wibbles.

This is the most entertaining of all the effects when you're just messing around and has seemingly endless possibilities available from its sliders.

Equaliser. Featuring ten frequency bands ranging from 34Hz to 17415Hz, the graphic equaliser is a very useful addition. The sound can be given up to 14dB of cut or boost in any or all of the frequency bands. It works just like a normal graphic equaliser but can be more precise than analogue versions.

could have put more time into developing software specifically for the card but I would imagine their main priority at this stage was actually getting the hardware into production and on sale. Even so, it seems a strange omission. As it is, the only way to take samples with the card is by selecting a file as the output path on the DelFX software. To trim and process the sample you then need to load it into a separate 16-bit sample editor that supports Delfina output. It's hardly the complete solution for 16-bit audio is it? Presumably a proper sample editor will be made available before too long. Some hard disk recording and editing features would be good too.

Aside from these omissions, the card is fairly well supported on the software side considering it's such a new product. If any of the uses suggested here seem to match your requirements then you're sorted.

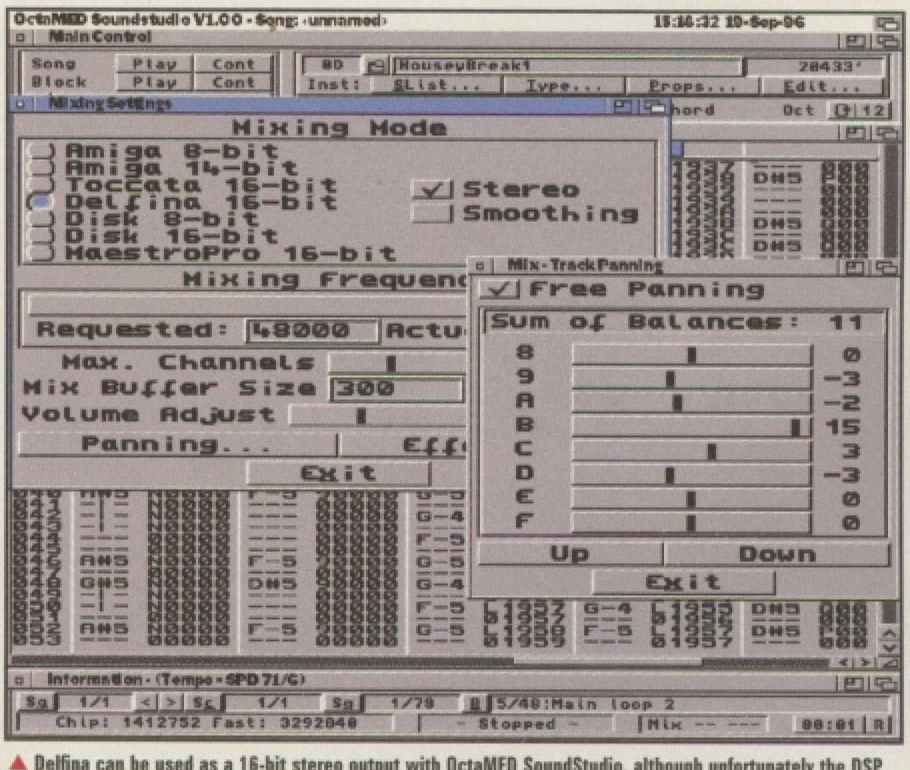
Conclusion

While Delfina is possible of producing impressive displays of audio trickery with the currently available software, I can't help feeling than it's got a lot more potential that is on actually show at the moment. With the right software it could do a lot more. How about multi-track hard disk recording with realtime 24-bit effects? Or maybe you fancy running a multi-channel SoundStudio module out in 16-bit stereo with selected parts sent to your own tailor made effects via the DSP, in realtime of course? However, before we get carried away with wishes for the future, it's worth remembering what it can do now, which is quite a lot (not forgetting the parallel and serial ports).

Priced at £400, Delfina comes in at £100 more than its nearest rival Toccata, but while Toccata has already been taken to its limits by the likes of SoundStudio, Delfina still has plenty of potential left in it thanks to the DSP.

As it stands the Delfina will certainly be the answer to many a musician's dream, but it's not yet the perfect answer to everyone's audio ambitions. However, with a killer application or two it could really start to shift in large numbers and break into the mainstream. We'll see what happens. ■

Tony Horgan



▲ Delfina can be used as a 16-bit stereo output with OctaMED SoundStudio, although unfortunately the DSP features of the card are not used. A Delfina compatible version of AudioLab 16 has just been released too.

How to order

At the time of going to press there is no UK distributor confirmed for Delfina, although it looks likely that Blittersoft (tel: 01908 261 477) will be supplying it. For the moment you can order it direct from Petsoff in Finland at the following address:
Petsoff Limited Partnership
PO Box 1009
FIN-53301 LRP
Finland
For more information you can Email them at petsoff@sci.fi or fax them on 00 358 5 452 3347 or 00 358 5 451 5223. Visa, Mastercard and Eurocard are accepted and there's a special discounted price for developers.

Delfina

A500 · A500+ · A600 · A1200 · A1500 · A2000 · A3000 · A4000

system requirements: Any Amiga with Zorro slots, hard drive and OS2 or above.

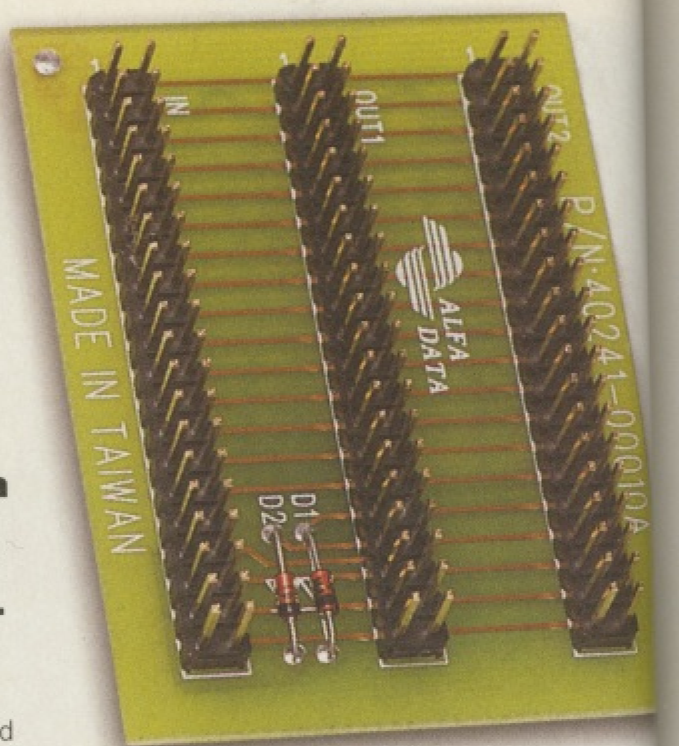
ease of use 91%
User-friendly MUI interface makes the effects program very attractive.

performance 85%
So far so good, but needs more advanced software to unlock its potential.

value for money 80%
It's not cheap by any stretch of the imagination.

OVERALL
Great hardware, but needs better software. **84%**

Alfa Quatro



■ **Price: £59** ■ **Developer: Alfa Data**
■ **Supplier: Golden Image UK © 0181 900 9291**

Looking to expand your storage options? Need a CD, more than one hard drive and your PCMCIA slot free? How about a four-way IDE interface ...

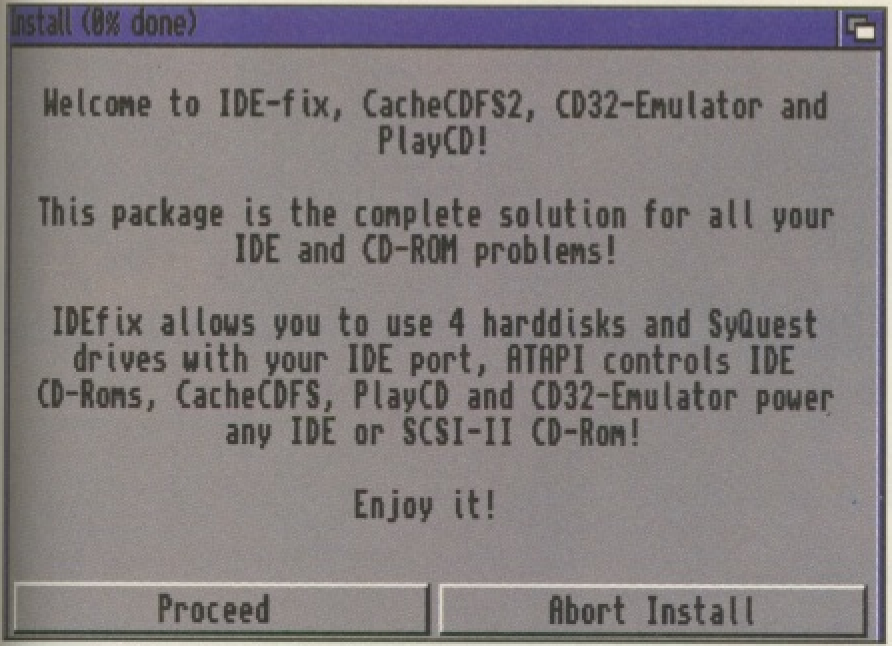
The beauty of having an IDE interface as standard on your A1200 or A4000 is that you can stoke up your machine with the cheapest CD-ROM and hard drives available. Things can get a bit tricky with an A1200 when it comes to power supplies and the practicalities of actually fitting these drives but it's possible and it's cheap. However, you're normally limited to just two devices running from the IDE interface, which for many situations is just not sufficient. The Alfa Quatro brushes this limitation aside, allowing the connection of up to four IDE drives from the one interface.

This version of the Alfa Quatro (currently the only one available) has been designed primarily for use with the A4000, although with a little enterprise it can be used with the A1200 too, and with the A500 and A500+ if an Alfapower hard drive is present. Once you've paid your £59 and opened the box you might be a little disappointed at what looks like very little for your money: three IDE cables, three IDE connectors mounted on a small piece of circuit board, an installation disk and a few instruction notes. Nevertheless, remind yourself of how much you might pay an alternative SCSI expansion system, including a SCSI interface and the more expensive drives.

Do it yourself

Reflecting the many different types of Amiga in use today and the adventurous DIY approach of many users, the Alfa Quatro system makes few assumptions about your system. This has good and bad sides. You're only supplied with and charged for the minimum parts required to do the job, the flipside of which is that in some cases you'll need to make extra purchases and modifications to fit your machine. The installation software is a fully registered version of IDE Fix, an excellent and highly configurable IDE hard drive and CD-ROM file system package.

Setting it up on an A4000 is a simple matter. The shorter of the three IDE cables plugs into the IDE connector on the motherboard,



▲ It's true, the IDE Fix software is a clever thing, giving you access to four IDE drives with the Alfa Quatro.

with the other end plugged into the supplied three-way IDE 'break-out' card. The two longer cables are then attached to the remaining connectors on the card. Each of these two cables can be plugged into two IDE devices. Probably the most awkward part of the physical installation regards the setting of jumpers on the drives (master/slave etc). If you've got an old drive with no jumper diagram this could take a bit of fiddling around before everything works in harmony, although newer drives tend to be more clearly labelled.

The software installation is a breeze. Whether you pick the expert or novice option, the stages are explained in plain terms which makes it easy to configure everything precisely to your system. The software you get is the full IDE Fix system, not a disabled or time-limited version. With a simple addition to your startup-sequence you'll be up and running in no time.

Complications

While this isn't sold as a complete four-way IDE solution for A1200 users, it's still possible to use it at least as a three-way interface. For some reason the A1200 doesn't seem to like working with four devices from the Alfa Quatro, but three get along fine together. If you intend using this with an A1200 you'll need to specify this when you order, as a 2.5 inch to 3.5 inch cable is required to connect to the A1200's smaller IDE interface. The cables can be passed out through the blank expansion port at the back of the computer by the floppy drive. The next hurdle will be powering your external drives (external meaning outside the case of your Amiga) – you could use bare internal drives so long as you can power them. Golden Image can supply boxes with power supplies for your drives. In our tests with the A1200 we used externally-placed internal drives powered from a MicroniK external power supply, which now seems to be very hard to get hold of. Golden Image also offer a powered PC tower casing option for extra drives.

Conclusion

This is just the kind of little widget that has kept the Amiga a viable platform for many users, and it's bound to solve many people's storage and CD problems in a single hit. If you're reaching the limits of your current storage capacity but don't fancy ditching your drives for totally new ones, this is the perfect solution. You get to keep what you've got and then chain on extra drives in addition. A1200 users can have two hard drives and a CD-ROM and still keep the PCMCIA port free for any other peripherals, like video grabbers, samplers and so on. If you don't mind a bit of jiggery pokery with cables and drives, this is very highly recommended. ■

Tony Horgan

Alfa Quatro

A500 · A500+ · A600 · A1200 · A1500 · A2000 · A3000 · A4000

system requirements: Any Amiga with IDE interface.

ease of use 80%
The cables can get messy but the software is excellent

performance 89%
Worked fine first time in all of our tests value for money

value for money 86%
It's well worth it for the access it allows to cheap IDE drives.

OVERALL
An ingenius expansion for CD-ROM and hard drives.

88%

Battle of the

IBrowse Vs AWeb-II

Miami came out tops over TermiteTCP in last's months TCP/IP stacks head-to-head. Now we decide which WWW browser is the best match for it.

AWeb-II

- **Price: £39.95**
- **Developer: Amitrix**
- **Supplier: Blittersoft**

✆ 01908 261 466

Email: bsoft@wildnet.co.uk

AWeb was born at a time when the only available browsers were AMosaic and an early demo version of IBrowse. Both of these suffered unexplained crashes to the point of infamy. The source of these breakdowns was generally perceived as being MUI's (Magic User Interface) fault as much as the browsers themselves as the the earlier versions of MUI considerably slowed down the performance of AMosaic especially on unaccelerated machines. As a result of this a Dutch programmer called Yvon Rozijn created AWeb, designing it to be the Amiga's first graphical MUI-less browser (incidentally, if you're not after graphics then you could try ALynx, which doesn't use MUI either).

AWeb has now been developed through several generations and was originally a shareware product but AmiTrix have recently released the latest version called AWeb-II in a bundle containing the browser and some support software.

Compared to MUI browsers, AWeb's GUI (Graphic User Interface, or front end) looks extremely basic and that criticism also includes the navigation buttons for forwards, backwards and reload etc. Fortunately support for custom images on the navigation buttons is included so you can ditch the standard ones and either save your own versions if you prefer or try some of the additional text or coloured buttons supplied with the pack.

AWeb uses the Amiga's datatypes to decode in-line images, similar to other Amiga browsers. This means the pictures must be totally downloaded before they are decoded and displayed. It also means that an AWeb user will have to ensure he/she is well up to date with the latest GIF and JPEG datatypes. Also AWeb takes the unusual approach of caching the raw image data after the GIFs/JPEGs have been decoded. The advantage of this is that navigating through previously downloaded pages is lightning fast, the disadvantage is that it takes up a lot of disk space.

One at a time

Unfortunately AWeb doesn't let the datatypes decode all images at the same time. It does each one separately which means the

IBrowse 1.0

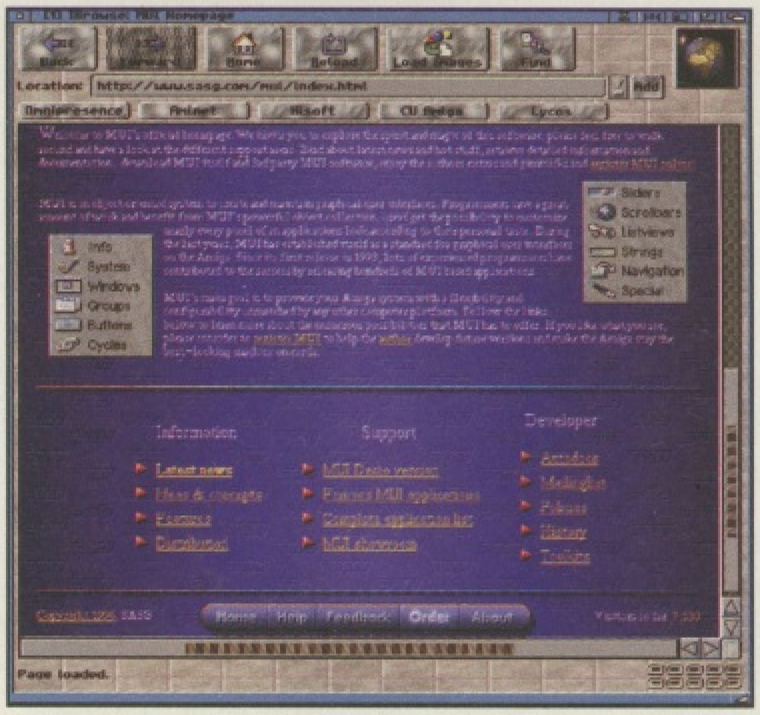
- **Price: £29.95**
- **Developer: Omnipresence**
- **Supplier: HiSoft**

✆ 01525 718181

Email:sales@hisoft.co.uk

IBrowse has had an interesting evolution. Its authors, Omnipresence, (there are seven of them) conspired in the past to port NSCA's Mosaic to the Amiga, the first professional web browser available for Amiga. Unfortunately it rapidly attained notoriety for its crash prone nature. IBrowse is the Omnipresence group's progression from Mosaic and it was built from the outset as an Amiga only browser as opposed to a port.

There have been beta demo versions of IBrowse available on the Net for some time now, as development has progressed. All of these have been time-limited so it was only possible to test them for a short period. But now, at last, IBrowse 1.0 has been released and is being distributed in the UK by HiSoft. And you'll be interested to know that it's the most advanced browser available on the Amiga at this time. Like Mosaic, the betas of IBrowse also had problems with stability, but these problems seem to have been ironed to a degree. I say 'to a degree', because it's by no means as rock solid as AWeb – I still discovered some random trashing of memory (enforcer hits) and gurus on trying to decode corrupt GIFs (though GIFs shouldn't be corrupt in the first place!) with the internal decoder. It also often crashes



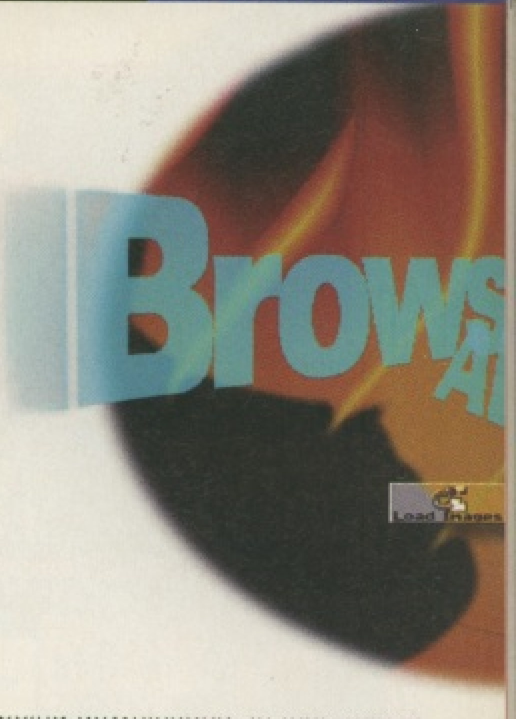
▲ Omnipresence have working a long time to perfect IBrowse. Although a superb program there are still some glitches to be ironed out.

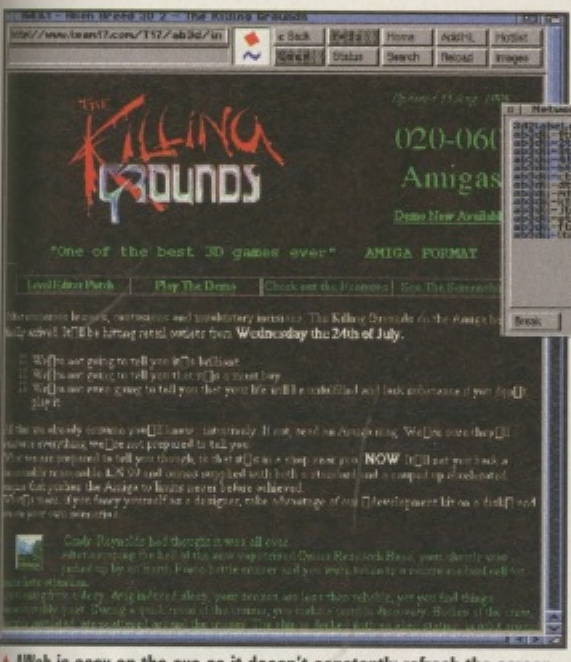
on exiting the package while cleaning up its on-disk cache. The authors know about the latter problem and it should be fixed by the time you read this review. However, it's annoying that after all this time there are still blips to be sorted out.

Decoders

Unlike every other Amiga browser, IBrowse doesn't use datatypes as standard, though it has the option if it's desired. Instead it has its own GIF and JPEG decoders built-in. What's the point of this? You might well ask and the answer is that once IBrowse has downloaded the actual HTML document, it looks at the IMG height and width tags (see Wired World HTML tutorials)

Browsers





▲ AWeb is easy on the eye as it doesn't constantly refresh the screen when an image is downloading.

palettes of the images are nowhere near as good as you would expect from, say, Voyager. However, AWeb now lays out the page according the image height and width tags which means the page doesn't need to refresh as each image is loaded. Part of the reason the one-at-a-time practice of image decoding may be because it allows AWeb the luxury of not having to refresh the entire display all the time. This is smoother and much easier on the eye than Voyager's constant annoying refreshes. Originally AWeb's talents at rendering Web pages left something to be desired. Now with AWeb 2.1, things are much better because of vast improvements in the justification/ alignment of images and text. Support for 'tables' has also been added which is a powerful HTML feature increasingly used on the Web. Unfortunately though there's still no proper 'frames' support. Instead AWeb displays links at the top of the pages you can view each individual frame separately.

FTP support isn't built in either but is provided as an add-on in the package in the form of the PD FTP Mount. However, AWeb has another PD utility to save out WWW pages as text which works adequately but I'd be happier if these were built into the browser. Unfortunately, it's necessary to set up a few of the external programs for Mail-To: operation, text editing, HTML source viewing etc, as the defaults will rarely be of use. AWeb needs many of those functions included internally as standard.

Nice stats

The speed AWeb retrieves pages at is very good and it's adept at opening multiple connections to a web site to download in-line images in parallel, making the best use of available bandwidth.

Another nice touch is a network statistics window which, being downloaded. In fact, this is the best progress display I've seen on any browser – watching it keeps you happily entertained and amused during the downloading phase.

The preferences aspect of AWeb is handled better than the previous versions too, with separate pages being divided into browser, program, network and ClassAct settings. The latter is the GUI system AWeb uses which can be loosely described as a poor man's MUI. Unlike MUI browsers, AWeb can be told to open on its own screen very quickly from inside the settings. Options such as the on-disk cache, proxies and other technical whiz bits are also easily set up.

Cache flushing is easy to reach via a menu of its own, as is

Continued overleaf ▶▶▶

and places a box frame where the pictures should be. AWeb does the same. This is before the pictures are loaded so the layout is identical to the end product minus the pictures.

This makes for very easy reading with no text rewrapping in the middle of picture downloading. The boxes are filled in by the pictures 'progressively' as they are downloaded. If you're lucky enough to be viewing a site with special interlaces or progressively saved GIFs/JPEGs then the pictures will actually resolve from a very low resolution progressively (and quickly) to a higher resolution until finally they are finished loading. However, one of the major reasons this system was invented in the first place was to avoid unnecessary screen refreshes as the display is altered to fit the pictures. IBrowse totally misses this point and refreshes the screen annoyingly anyway. After AWeb's clarity this becomes tiring.

Tables support

Like AWeb IBrowse supports tables though sadly not frames. Tables are a nice feature of HTML which allows text to be laid out in columns boxed out in the display. It makes for superb page design and browsers which can't support tables have a serious problem as they cannot display many fancy commercial sites.

Frames support still doesn't exist but as with AWeb small links are made to display the contents of each of the frames in turn. The IBrowse authors have informed me that frames support is indeed coming and it would be relatively easy to implement under the MUI system. What's more, Usenet news reading would be implemented at the same time so that the separate frames could control the news reader in the same way as the PC's Netscape does.

IBrowse is not only a MUI application, it's an incredibly advanced MUI application and it comes as standard with MUI 3.5 bundled. This version has actually been created based on collaboration between Omnipresence and MUI's author.

The navigation buttons can be the image type, or text and can

Continued overleaf ▶▶▶

Coming into focus



One of IBrowse's great features is its capability to load images progressively. This means that as they download they are shown in ever increasing resolution. This far more pleasing to the eye than staring at a blank screen until the image is fully loaded.



images automatically to loading manually which many people prefer to enable fast navigation around the Net.

AWeb has good bookmark support which adds links from your favourite pages to a special hotlists page for fast renavigation to favourite sites. It also has a very handy option which brings up a list of most of the common Web searchers and allows you to execute a search without bothering to go to the sites themselves.

Amiga friendly

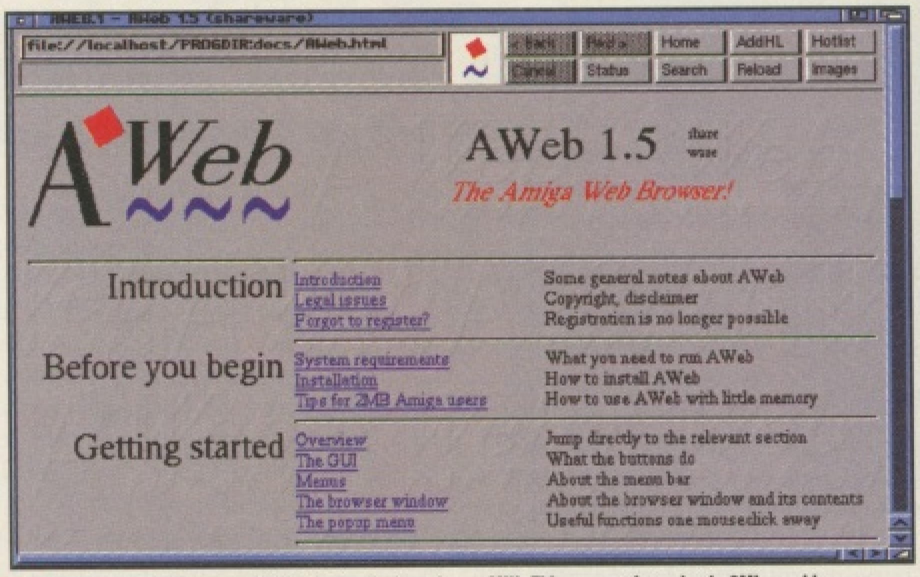
A major advantage of AWeb is that since AWeb doesn't use MUI it can be light on memory resources. When used with AmiTCP (Miami is an MUI application), it would allow a basic 2Mb machine to get on-line without too much difficulty. However, it's going to be slow and not very colourful as greater colour depths will require more than 2Mb.

Surprisingly, AWeb actually incorporates a print function that performs a graphical dump of the page currently being displayed. To my knowledge this is the only Amiga browser to do this and it's a most welcome addition. There's even an option to turn off printing of any background images to make the text much easier to read.

Unlike IBrowse, AWeb chooses to sport its documentation on disk in the form of HTML pages which can always be accessed by pressing the Help key. The quality of the documentation is superb with a main index and several cross-referenced links. I would have liked to have seen some in-line images showing the various aspects in play within the document but such as it is, there's little to fault the superb on-line help.

The AWeb-II package comes with a variety of utilities but virtually all of them are really to add a function which really should have been included in the browser initially. Only the HTML Heaven WWW helper package is notable, as this is a quality package and a welcome addition if you're looking to make your own pages. AWeb is a stable and efficient WWW browser which the Amiga has been in need of for some time. Highly recommended. ■

Mat Bettinson



▲ One of the main features of AWeb is that it doesn't use MUI. This means that a basic 2Mb machine can easily get on line with it.

A-Web II

AMIGA SUPERSTAR

A500 · A500+ · A600 · A1200 · A1500 · A2000 · A3000 · A4000

system requirements: A Internet connection and a TCP/IP stack. 2Mb of free memory. Kickstart 3.0 and GIF/Jpeg datatypes.

ease of use 86%
Installation is easy though post configuration is a tad annoying.

performance 91%
Fast and efficient to and it also sports very powerful features just to make it easier to use.

value for money 88%
Excellent value for a quality product. Good price, good performance.

OVERALL
A masterpiece of Amiga Internet engineering.
91%



▲ IBrowse is a great browser. However, its use of MUI makes it impossible to use on Amigas with 2Mb.

even be relocated to the side of the page by simply dragging the entire button bank! This is a superb feature as screens are always wider than web pages so no vertical space is wasted on navigation buttons. Once I had made use of this feature and moved the buttons to the side of the screen, I wondered how I got along without it before.

Email and FTP facilities are built in to IBrowse. If they're set up correctly (which is quick and easy) in the lovely MUI preferences pages then they can be forgotten about from then on. No need to write a script to drive your own Email client. IBrowse even has a built in cache-browser like the freeware Voyager but it's activated from within IBrowse. Here you can scan back though all the previously download pages and pictures, select view and copy them to use elsewhere.

Features

IBrowse supports Client Side Image Maps though sadly only the RECT shape. Again see the Wired World tutorial on this subject last month. I was told the authors would 'look into' implementing full CSIM support soon. It also supports AnimGIFs and again is the only browser to do so. This facility is another major feature which has increasing support in WWW land so that without this facility much will be missed from modern web sites. See the Wired World tutorial this month on AnimGIFs for more.

There's another nice IBrowse feature in a magic menu-like behaviour when using the right mouse button with the mouse inside the HTML page. You could selectively load the image in (if loading of images wasn't set on automatic). It could be copied elsewhere. If it was a link, a link may be added hotlink added via Browse's superb hot-link manager. It's even possible to select the link and launch a new IBrowse window at the link while the original page stays where it is. This is truly gorgeous!

Memory usage

IBrowse is one hell of a browser. However it's heavy dependence on MUI makes it impossible to run in 2Mb of memory. One aspect of MUI which is often overlooked by the memory conscious is that once the core libraries are loaded, they are shared by the various MUI clients. Using an Internet set-up based on MUI applications such as IBrowse, YAM, AmFTP, AmIRC and Miami would actually be more efficient than running Gadtools based programs.

In operation IBrowse is staggeringly fast at presenting what's happening right away and image decoding with its highly optimised progressive decoders. At the moment, the Web on an Amiga looks best on IBrowse. Frames and Java script are promised in forthcoming releases of the package where others scrabble for the features IBrowse already has. If the authors can add those features and fix the last niggly stability problems then this will be the ultimate Amiga browser. As it is it's close enough to come highly recommended at any rate. ■

Mat Bettinson

IBrowse 1.0

A500 · A500+ · A600 · A1200 · A1500 · A2000 · A3000 · A4000

system requirements: A Internet connection and a TCP/IP stack. 3Mb of free memory. 3.5MB of HD space. Kickstart 3.0.

ease of use 90%
Installation is easy and IBrowse has lots of useful functions built-in.

performance 89%
IBrowse is currently the most advanced Amiga WWW browser though it could be more stable.

value for money 93%
£30 for a browser of this quality complete with a printed manual is a total bargain.

OVERALL
Superb browser. Shows what an Amiga is capable of.
88%

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M018 THE XMAS SONG (disk) very funny
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M150 TIFFANNY I Think We're Alone Now
M171 MADONNA - (Like a Virgin)
M173 JANET JACKSON - RHYTHM NATION
M177 PET SHOP BOYS
M184 SAM FOX - (PLEASE ME)
M186 MADONNA - (RESCUE ME)
M188 JOE Le TAXI
M189 MICHAEL JACKSON (SMOOTH CRIMINAL)
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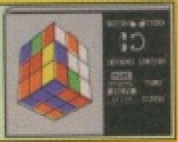
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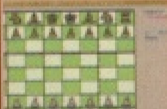
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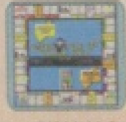
GAMES

G222 MEGA 21 GAMES amazing 21 games
G235 DRAGON-CAVE brilliant 3D puzzle games
G240 QUADRIX very addict excellent
G242 TAKE EM OUT like to Operation wolf
G253 DESTINE MOON BASE Arcade conversion
G272 TANK BATTLE 2 player tank battle game
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G326 MEGA GAME COLLECTIONS III 3 top games
G329 MADONNA NUDE PUZZLES for 18+ only
G331 GRAVITY massive space exploring game
G333 CYBER-NETIC Brillant 8 way blaster
G334 DONKEY KONG -(A1200 order code AGA296)
G336 CRAZY SUE II- best platform to date
G342 SUPER SKODA CHALLENGE (& track editors)
G344 STAR-TREK similar to RAID2 but harder
G355 DOODY very cute & extremely addict
G356 WONDER LAND amazing graphic recommend
G362 DELUXE PACMAN + best pacman ever release
G367 CARD GAMES collection
G368 WIZARD-DOMAINS-dugeon type games
G370 KALATRIZ (notA1200) arcade tetriz clone
G373 AIR ACE II Very playable shoot em up
G384 OTHELLO best PD version
G386 MOUSE IMPOSSIBLE very addictive puzzle
G390 TETREN most polish Tetriz ever release
G392 STRIKEBALL brillant base ball clone
G399 TRAILBLAZER brillant (not A1200)
G400 FIGHTING WARRIOR like street fighter
G404 DOMINOES only one of it kind on PD
G406 TOTAL WARS -strategy like chess in space
G411 BATTLE CAR 2- 3D car racing
G431 NESTER CARD GAME- hours of fun for a quit.
G436 ROULETE american roulete excellent
G438 TRAILBLAZER 2 C64 conversion
G441 E-TYPE 2- very good asteroid great graphic
G443 OLEMPIAD DISK (2D) Olympic sport events
G445 DESCENDER GAME tank, search & desender
G446 OBLIDOX excellent Arcade/Puzzle game
G448 PARACHUTE JOUST quite playable
G455 CASTLE OF DOOM VG graphic adventure.
G460 WIBBLE WORLD GIDDY Large platform game
G467 CASH FRUIT- good fruit machines
G478 AMOS CRICKET cricket games
G488 EXTREAM VILONCE 2 player battle out
G489 ENGIMA MACHINE very challenging puzzle
G490 MEGA BALL 2 very playable break out clone
G491 BOUNCE & BLAST brillant platform 10/10
G492 ZOMBIES & DEFENDER 2 fantastic games
G494 MERCANERY SIMULATION 3D wars games
G499 LIFE -simulation very interesting
G500 TRANSPLANT dozen of level fast arcade
G501 KLAWZ THE KAT-great platform games
G511 HIGHWAY HELL like SPY HUNTER on the C64
G531 OPERATION FIRESTORMS-brillant
G534 CASTLE KUMQUAT similar to Alien breed
G536 BLACK DAWN brillant graphic adventure
G538 MORIA 5.4 The latest Dungeon & dragon
G539 BRIDGE Good version of bridges
G540 ORK ATTACK bloody adventure

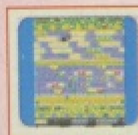
101 GAMES

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MUST FOR ANY GAME PLAYER
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All games are selectable from an easy to use menu & most games come with full playing instructions



G541 REBOUNCE 2 player futuristic breakout
G542 ROAD TO HELL brillant car racing
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G545 KUNGFU CHARLIES mix with platform brill.
G546 RAID 4 latest vertical scroll shoot em up
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G560 IMPERIAL WALKER -Base on STAR WAR games
G567 STARBASE 13 (2D) Brill like MONKEY ISLAND
G657 AMOS LOADSA MONEY best FRUIT-MACHINES
G659 MR MEN OLYMPIC (2D) many event to complete
G660 4 L.C.D DREAM 4 small hand held gamesG
664 NEIGHBOUR GAMES (2D) base on the TV series
G665 TIME RUNNER (WB2/3) Brillant graphic
G667 GOLF (2DISK) One of the first & decent GOLF
G668 AMOS CRICKET 2 New Amos cricket simulator
G669 MUGSY REVENGE gangster graphic adventure
G672 JIGSAW (2DISK) very playable jigsaw games
G673 BOBBY GARDEN + DIGGER (NEW) Brillant
G674 HIGH OCTANE Fast car racing (notwb1.3)
G675 TIME RUNNER amazing graphic adventure
G680 SPACE-INVASION 2 - Fantastic Galaxain
G681 AUTOMOBILES - PD version of SKID MARK bril
G682 BANDIT MANIA - Brillant fruit machine demo
G685 PROJECT BUZZ BAR -Brillant asteroid
G689 GUN FIGHT (not A500/1.3)
G690 THE REAL POPEYE 64 (a500 1.3 only)
G692 SYSTEM DEFEND-Brillant Defender clone
G698 AMIGA-BOY-Game boy emulaor + tetriz
G732 DETHELL IN SPACE. Recommed.
G735 OVERLANDER Brillant arcade MOON ALERT
G737 SERIOUS BACKGAMMON The best in PD BG



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G771 STAR WOID (2 Disk) brillant Thrust
G772 UN-SENSIBLE SOCCER very similar toSensible scoccer games. RECOMMEND
G773 FRUIT MANIA -Brillant Fruit machine.
G774 TRICKLE TREAT -like DOOM on the PC
G775 FOOT-BALL MANAGER-new version
G782 SOLO ASSAULT 3D like Wing Commander
G783 SEED OF DARKNESS-Brillant graphic adven
G784 NANO FLY Superb explore game RECOMMEND
G785 THE GREAT GOLD RAID- very addicted
G787 ANT WAR V1.9 (LATEST) not 1.3
G788 ZENO-MORPH -Great grahic
G789 TASK FORCE very good MIND SHADOW clone
G790 GREEN FIVE Amazing 3D graphic like
G791 PROFFESIONAL BINGO CALLER
G792 MARTIAL SPRIT like Street fighter II
G798 6 EXCELLENT CARD GAMES collection
G809 BLITZ 2 fast action shooting games
G810 EXIT 13 Brillant puzzle
G811 TEMPORAL MISPLACEMENT-graphic adventure
G812 ADAY AT THE RACE-V.Goodhorse racing games
G820 BOULDER ORIGINAL with 80 level
G821 BOULDERDASH cave/level Construction kit
G822 BOULDER COLLECTION 2/3 160 level (2disk)
G839 BOULDER PACK with 640 level on 8 disk
G860 ALIEN NET WORK-new Spacing invader
G862 BATTLE FORCE excellent text adventure.
G863 GNU CHESS the best chess with 10 level
G866 SWORD OF YIGG Graphic adventure
G867 POWER-TETRIZ for 1 or 2 player
G868 SUPER SMASHING TETRIZ
G870 CHESS II & CHECKER One of the best around must for all CHESS or CHECKER player
G871 GRAVITY FORCE 2 1 or 2 player thrust clone

G872 SCHNEBITZ Commercial quality puzzle games
G875 DELEXE GALA v2.3(new) add new feature &bouns gamme + 2 player RECOMMEND. get it now
G876 THE KRILLIAN INCENDENT like ELITE2/Epic
G878 QUANTUM-Maze colect & escape type games

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new 101 pack 3 contains over 100 games. run on all Amigas only £11.99 offer buy any 2 pack together & recieve a free £4 token for use with next order "this offer cannot be used with any other offer current & subject to condition apply

G879 RAG TO RICHES - like MONOPLY
G884 WIPE OUT-mindless blasting gamse
G885 GODZILLA Another shootem up
G886 SUPER MEGA FRUIT- All new Fruit Machine
G888 DRIVING MANIAC 3D (fill vector likeind500) car racing- very fast. RECOMMEND
G889 PLANET FALL - Lunar Lander clone
G891 BUCK TOOTH ADVENTURE Very good multilevel shoot/collect em up RECOMMEND
G892 PENGO 2- Maze type games. Recommend
G893 SUPER OBLITERATION Blast asteroid verysimilar to PANG 2 lot of weapon RECOMMEND
G894 SUPER INVASION II -New SPACING INVADIER
G897 THE SHEPERD Brillant POPULUS clone. REC
G898 ALIEN GENOCIDE (2) Shoot aliens set in space.
G899 PUCKMAN. One of the better PacMan arround.
G900 SUPER-BATTLE ZONE.3D (not WB1.3)
G901 M*A*S*H a (ANTWAR 2) play very similar toLEMMING & WORM, with load of Weapon (Brillant)
G904 LAST SOLDIER (2) multilevel platform games
G905 CBBERTECH (2) exclent ALIEN BREED Clone
G906 HANGMAN any one for a game?
G907 ACE SPACE nice Platform games
G908 COLOURMANIA slide/Klatriz type puzzle games
G910 HARRY-HADDOCK- Brillant platformer games
G912 MANGLE FENDER -Brillant. Smash up othercar/tank ect to win. extremly addicted. get it
G913 ARCADE GAMES CLASSIC Vol 1 & 2 (2d)
G914 HELICOPTER-play like Desert strike
G915 COW WARS. Very addicted 2 player games
G916 ISLAND -Play like Monoply.
G919 COP THE LOT Pro Latest Lottery preditor
G920 LOTTERY PROFFESIONAL This version use
G921 MONOPLY. (board games) The best version
G922 JET WILLY 3 - excellent platform games
G923 FLAMMING ENGINE-Superb car racing
G924 POWER MACHINES. Grahicaly brillant shoot
G925 SUCIDE-MACHINE Operation wolf style
G926 ZAXXON 3D Superb C64 3D blaster games
G927 BOING V3. Great platformer. recommend
G928 PUNTER-Animate horse racing games
G929 ARCADE JIGSAW (2d) include LION KING
G930 WHEEL CHAIR GLADITOR-Very fun to play
G931 NIMBLE-Brillant New arcade puzzle.
G933 BLACK DAWN 3- THE NEW BEGINNING (2) Superb 3D adventure. RECOMMEND
G934 R3 ROCKET (NEW)very good rockets games
G935 BATTLE SHIP- the finest PD version
G936 LAST LAP - Fast car racing

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E020 WORLD DATABASE require (2+meg)
E021 STORY LAND II interact puzzle games rec
E022 LANGUAGE TUTOR teach you 4 language
E023 TALKING COLOURING BOOK talking Dpaint bril
E024 EASY SPELL II improve your kid spelling
E025 SCRABBLE require 2-4player. brillant
E026 WORDS can help you solve the crossword
E027 OSWALD Very colourful large cartoon game
E030 EVOLUTION breed your own hybrid
E031 IQ TEST + IQ GAMES pack 1 excellent
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E038 AMIGA TUTORIAL 7 part tutorial
E039 COMPUTER CARE how to care about AMIGA
E040 GUIDE TO LOWER BACK PAIN tutorial the spine & how to avoid back pain. (recommend)
E041 KID ALPHABET display all alphabet letter
E042 FRACTION & SILOUEST maths & games excellent
E043 MATH MASTER teach/test you more on maths
E044 STEAM ENGINE V2 graphic & tutorial
E045 PETROL ENGINE tutorial & animate graphic
E046 GAS TURBINE ENGINE tutorls & anim graphic
E047 STIRLING ENGINE tutorial & anim graphic
E050 DREAM FOR ANGEL explain the meaning of dream E051 INVISIBLE WORLD brillant recommend
E052 FISH TANK turn your amiga into a FISHTANK
E054 DEMOLITION MISSION simple game for kid
E055 WORD POWER solve crossword puzzle ect good.
E056 WORM HOLE simple game ideal for children.
E057 APPLE CATCHER catch falling apple brillant
E058 CROSS MAZE & CRYPTOKING 2 excellent kid games E059 VERB QUIZ find the word & it related. Bril
E061 KING JAMES BIBLE (4d) complete bibles excel
E066 TARROT clairvoyant in a instance
E068 GALLOW fancy a games of hang man?
E070 MATH DRILLS teach all basic math skill Vgood
E071 ERROR INFO give info why your amiga crash
E075 WORLD-WAR 2 graphics tutorial on WORLD-WAR releate program eg simulate Starprobe/ molecube/ ect
E076 SCIENCE an excellent collection of science ideal for all who interesting or studies in science recommend. this pack come on 4 disks
E080 KIDPRIX great children paint programme.
E081 ASTROMY PACK- This is a mazing collection of programe relate to astromy. can help to locate certain or star position ect. must for anyone who studies astromy or hobby. great (4DISK)
E073 PICTURE & LETTER learn to reads- first step
E074 AMIGA BEGINER GUIDE tutorial on Amigas
E085 NODDY PLAYTIME demo >Very good
E060 KID PIX more excellent paint programes
E081 D.T.P FOR KID easy to use, excellent
E092 SING A RYHMES sing a song
E094 HIGH WAY CODE TUTOR question on highway code E096 READ & LEARN (2D) THREE LITTLE PIGGY Story
E097 BACK TO SKOOL vol 1 collection of the best
E098 BACK TO SKOOL vol 2 in education programe
E099 BACK TO SKOOL vol 3 & games. RECOMMED

E100 LITTLE TRAVELER information on world wide
E101 WORLD GEOGRAPHY world with map & text.
E103 DISCOVERY OF THE ATOM. tutorial on the Atom (2D) E1... DESK TOP GUIDE TO MUSIC(3D) guide & tutorial
E107 TRUMPTY FIREWORK ALPHABET Very entertaining way t... teach your child the ALPHABET
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E165 KEY BOARD TRAINER An excellent tuping tutor
E166 WORD POWER- spellcheck/crossword solver/teach E168 CROSSWORD CREATOR-design crossword
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E170 HISTORY OF AVIATION Vol 1 Excellent disk
E171 CHILD FAVOURITE-Education prog
E172 ANIMAL LAND-Learn about animal
E175 FRANTIC GUIDE TO COMPUTER (2D) brillant & funny E1... CYBER PUNK 2 for cyberPunk freak only
E178 STAR-TREK & STARTREK NEXT GERENATION GUIDE I... must for startrek fan contained 100s of picture from the startrek SERIES. 2
E181 SIGNTURE CREATOR customise your own signture. E18... VIRUS WORKSHOP V4 comprehensive guide
E184 IMAGINES VIDEO 2disk
E185 WORKBENCH 2/3 GUIDE On line help/Complete
E210 LEARN & PLAY 3 Latest Education & Games
E240 BARNEY THE BEAR GOES CAMPING (2d) Brillant teach y... child about animal
E241 COMMS GUIDE V1.1 beginner modem user
E242 GUIDE TO WEATHER (3d) superd comlplete guide to the weather. recommend
E245 MATH ATTACK- Maths relate games for kids
E242 ANIMAL-LAND-ideal for young kid. Execel
E243 PICTURE-MATHS-Maths program for kids
E246 BEGINER GUIDE TO WB 3 (A1200 only)
E247 GLOBE FACT(2) fact about planet earth
E248 KID ONLY. 6 excelent game to play with
E250 SANTA -Help santa collect present games
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AGA003 WORKBENCH HACK many hack/toy/blanker ect
AGA006 NEW SUPER KILLER know kmow & kill over316 type of virus must for all A1200 owner
AGA007 MINDWARP very first demo for the A1200
AGA008 KLONDIKE DELUXE AGA (3D) the best A1200 cardgames with gamours lady as cards face 18 + only
AGA011 SLEEPLESS NIGHT 3
AGA012 PLANET GROOVE Truly A1200 Demos
AGA013 MOTOR INVADER 2 (2D) Brillant INVADER game
AGA015 POINT OF SCALE Great A1200 only demos
AGA016 CHROMAS- Fairly good demo.
AGA017 WORLD OF MANGA (4DISK) magnificent Japanesecomic slide show include Japanes Chick ect recommend
AGA021 MAGIC WORKBENCH Improve the look of your WB& add some function to your WB really BRILLIANT
AGA022 WB 3 UTILITIES load of Wb 3 only utilities
AGA023 U-CHESS the best chess program games sofar but require 4 megbytes. Brillant graphic
AGA024 WORKBENCH 3 SCREEN Great back drop
AGA41 ADULT SLIDE Vol 1-9 (2 disk each) *see below
AGA62 BODY SHOP VOL 1-7 (2 disk each) *see below
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DEGRADER
AGA090 A1200 FIX DISK COLLECTION 1
AGA091 A1200 FIX DISK 2 COLLECTION 2
AGA094 RELOCKIT V1.4a latest. run A500 SOFTWARE
AGA306 A1200 FIX DISK VOL 3 (new july 95)
All disk above are design to make any old A500-A600 Amiga programe/games ect to run on your A1200/A4000 MUST FOR ALL AGA AMIGA OWNER. RECOMMEND

AGA097 A1200 UTIL - AGA TESTER, SYSINFO ect
AGA098 ACTION REPLAY V4 Complete ACTION REPLAY.
AGA099 MADFIGHTER 2 brillant street fighter clone
AGA100 AGA BLITZ SCREEN BLANKER
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AGA102 AGA DIAGNOSTIC - NEW system tester
AGA103 BLACK BOARD AGA decent Image processor
AGA105 QUICK GRAB AGA -grab AGA screen PICTUREAGA110 WORLD BEYONDS 1 (3) stunning 256 COLOUR fantasy art. ease start userbreathless
AGA114 SMELL LIKE CHANEL NO5 brillant demoray trace picture ever release on the A1200
AGA121 MAGIC FACTORY 1 STAR TREK (5 disk)
AGA133 AGA UTIL v1&2 (2) AGA util compilation
AGA135 AGA UTIL V3 &4 (2) more of above
AGA137 MULTIBOOT- 4 various version A500 EMU
AGA138 OFFICIAL WORKBENCH 3 HARDDRIVE INSTALLER
AGA139 WB3 HARDDISK PREF & INSTALLER installing
AGA140 CROSS DOS PLUS v5.1 read/write PC files
AGA142 SUPER LEAGUE 3 -latest manager games
AGA144 SPEAK & SPELL - educational software for kid
AGA145 BIG TOPS (18 + only)HMMmm
AGA146 KELOG LAND -brillant platform games
AGA150 ACTION REPLAY V5 - NEW UP DATE TO V4
AGA160 GIGER TRIZ very playable 256 colour tetriz
AGA162 FATAL-BLOW new STREET-FIGHTER 2 clone
AGA164 CINDY CRAWFORD Vol1 (2 disk) latest release
AGA166 INFESTATION (3 disk) The ultimated AGA demo
AGA170 CINDY CRAWFORD Vol II (2disk) amazing
AGA172 VIDEO TRACKER AGA-ultimate demo maker
AGA174 MAGIC WB EXTRA vol 1 & 2 (2disk)
AGA180 GIF BEAUTIES Vol (11-18) 8 more girls disk
AGA189 FRIDAY AT 8 another brillant AGA demos
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AGA192 ALIEN FRENZE 2 player blasting +power up
AGA194 BIG TIME SENSUAL (2disk) SPACE BALL 2
AGA200 MASQUERADE 2disk brillant puzzle games.
AGA202 RAM JAM 94 it cat be done (2disk)
AGA203 EXPLIXIT 2 DEMO new effect welldone.
AGA204 COMPLEX ORIGIN 2disk require 2 diskdrive
AGA206 TREASURE OF TUTANKHAMUN- eductaion tool
AGA230 LOVE 2 disk-simply brillant DEMOS
AGA231 AGA UTIL 7 & 8 (2 disk) .More USEFUL util
AGA234 KNOTTY-Stunning AGA sliding pictre puzzles
AGA240 LOTTERY WINNER hope fully will improveyour chance of winning a jack pot..GOOD-LUCK
AGA241-258 AGA GAME-GALORE AGA 01-18 lot of games
AGA251 PACKMAN AGA -the best pacman yet
AGA252 ROCKET PD - Super thrust clonebrillant graphic for 1 or 2 player
AGA253 REAL DEMO stunning special effect
AGA254 DIRT AGA Brillant 256 colour effect.
AGA255 DELIGHT EXPLORE exclient demo
AGA256 KEFEREN AGA Demo lot of effect
AGA257 MINOMIST RAVE great rave music.
AGA258 OXYGENE Fantastic demo
AGA259 INTEL-OUT another very good demo
AGA260 SOMEJUSTIC94 Demo of the monthbrillant whirl effect. RECOMMEND
AGA262 TO THE DEATH very good STREET-FIGHTER clone with very good graphic.
AGA263 GEORGE GALAXO (2disk) brillantmultilevel shoot/platform game. RECOMMEDN
AGA265 MISSILE OVER ZENON (2disk) Brillant3D missile commander with fantastic graphic
AGA266 TEAM-HOI DINO PLATFORM excellent dinoplatform Note:this disk was a commercial games
AGA274 MUSIC 2 SURVIVE 2disk 8 excellentmusic master piece. well worth getting
AGA271 RAVE MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE II (2disk)
AGA278 CHANNEL Z ISSUE 1 (AGA) (2disk)
AGA base disk magazines. RECOMMENDAGA disk magazine topic.demo/music
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U688 INVENTORY 2 details of home contents, for insurance
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PD Scene

public domain

Anthony Brice packed up his troubles in his old kit bag and went off in search of what the world of public domain had to offer. Here's what he came back with.

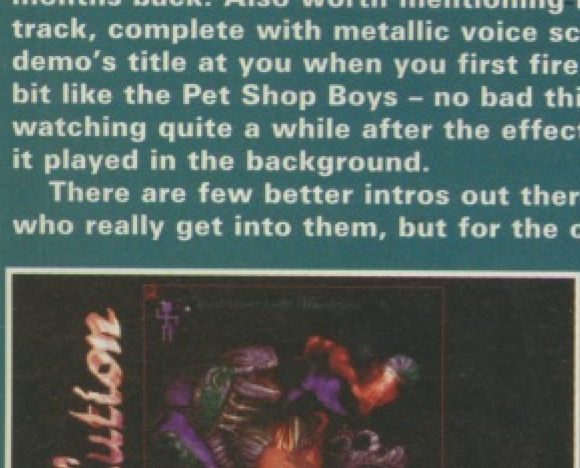
Revolution
AGA demo



This is an interesting demo I picked up on my travels. It's actually been written by a few English guys which is, as far as I'm aware, quite rare these days, as most of the demo stuff seems to come from abroad.

Revolution is pretty standard fare, but it's all done nicely and all of the still-screens used as a backdrop for the vector balls and doughnut routines are pretty tasty. I recognised one of them from the movie Hackers that came and went a few months back. Also worth mentioning is the funky music track, complete with metallic voice screaming the demo's title at you when you first fire it up. It sounds a bit like the Pet Shop Boys – no bad thing – and kept me watching quite a while after the effects had finished as it played in the background.

There are few better intros out there for those who really get into them, but for the casual observer, this one's definitely well worth viewing.

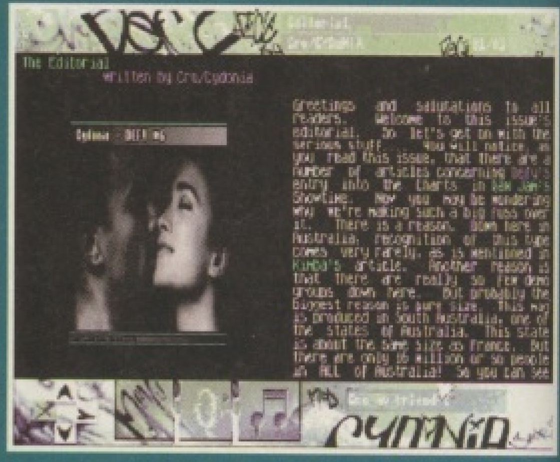


Available from:
AminetPath:
demo/aga/
revolution.lha

82 %

Demo of the Month

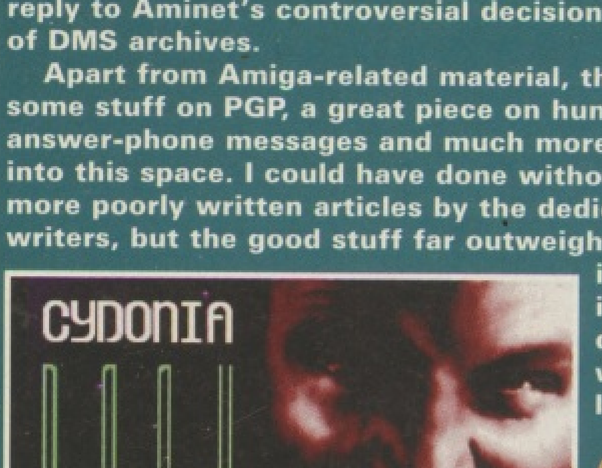
Defy 6
Australian Scene disk magazine



Now this is what I call a decent disk magazine. It's very nicely laid out and has lots of images to go with the smaller articles. The very professional front-end makes it very easy on the eye. It also looks great with the green/white and grey colour scheme and the navigation around the pages is handled very intuitively via cursor keys or mouse.

Defy 6, (I presume there were a previous five issues of the magazine), is an Australian 'Scene' magazine that goes a lot further than a lot of the other efforts that concentrate on purely Amiga related material and has a huge variety of articles covering other interesting material as well. For example, there are pieces on degrading your system for running poorly written demos that won't work with all Amigas, an interesting read on IRC and information for good Amiga places as well as a reply to Aminet's controversial decision to ban the use of DMS archives.

Apart from Amiga-related material, there's also some stuff on PGP, a great piece on humourous answer-phone messages and much more than I can fit into this space. I could have done without some of the more poorly written articles by the dedicated 'scene' writers, but the good stuff far outweighs the bad. This is great stuff indeed! It's definitely well worth taking a look at.

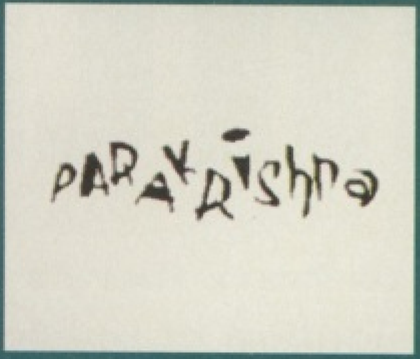


Available from:
AminetPath:
demo/mag

90 %

Parakrishna
party five demo

And now for something just a little bit different. For those with a little taste for the extraordinary, have a look at this. However, if you're offended by anything taking a poke at religion then leave it alone. Amongst the messages regarding the supposed bad-vibes in the scene right now, you're treated to exploding hari-krishnas. Some of us may find this amusing, but others not. If nothing else, this demo is different even though the music is a bit repetitive.



Look up there! Is it a bird? A plane? No, it's a hari-krishna on a parachute. If you don't know what I'm talking about yet, get this demo and you'll get the idea.

Available from: Your Choice PD, 39 Lambton Rd, Chorlton, Manchester M21 0ZJ. Tel:0161 881 8994. Price:£1.50 plus 70p P+P.

82 %

Severed
AGA demo

At last a themed demo. Too many of the recent batch have all been just fancy graphical effects bolted into a few sequences to show off new ideas without any real thought in presenting them in any themed manor. OK, so that's probably not really the idea of creating a demo in the first place but it certainly makes a change and Severed gets praise for that as well as being pretty neat in its own right. Apparently it also won second prize at a convention called Abduction 96 as well which should prove its pedigree as a worthwhile download despite being nearly 2Mb in size. Set in a medieval theme, Severed opens with a castle backdrop and several rendered images of helmets, axe handles and the like doing the rotation thang. The backdrop changes every few objects to relieve the samey-feeling with suitable pictures for the setting such as ornamental scrolls and between these effects there's a short slideshow of some very nice aga hand-drawn artwork which is more than pleasing to the eye. Cut to the end and the music changes tempo to a dramatic piece complete with severed head bouncing around the logo. Very graphic and not for the squeamish. I loved it. Recommended.



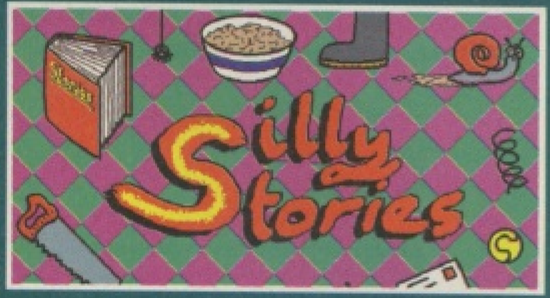


Available from: AminetPath: demo/aga/severed.lha

89 %

Silly Stories
word game

A regular CU Amiga Magazine reader, Paul Riggs, has come up with a very entertaining game called Silly Stories which will run on any Amiga with 1Mb of memory. Written in Amos, Silly Stories lets you type in a list of words which it will then output into a story for you, which, depending on your choice of words, can create very funny results. I had great fun playing around with it, and, due to Paul's clever idea of storing multiple banks of words which you can store on disk and recreate classics at a moments notice, there's potential here for a lot of laughs. Think of the fun you could have especially when there's a group of you playing the game who have just come back from the pub. And no, we at CU have no wish to learn what words you use after all-night drinking.



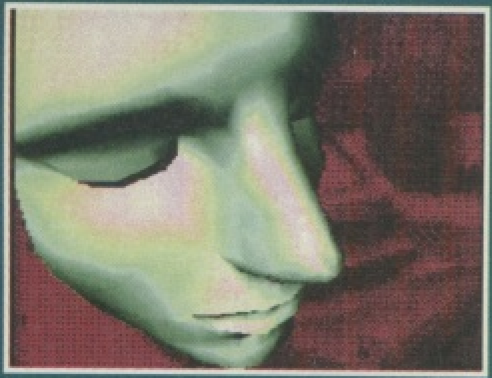
Another clever idea in the game is the use of different templates that use your words, such as the history lesson and diary. These add long-term appeal and playing around with the game is great fun due to the multiple silly samples playing in the background which had me in stitches. Very good fun, especially with a group of you competing to see who's is best. And remember: no swearing!

Available from: CU-CD 4. Price: FreeWare

82 %

Television
AGA demo

To date this ranks as the most bizzare demo I've ever seen. I recommend you take a look but you are going to need a reasonable-spec Amiga to be able to run it. The file alone uncompressed is over two and a half megabytes and needs an 030 machine with an extra 4Mb of fast RAM. If you qualify then grab this and see what it does for you.



Television is, according to its creators Bizzare Arts, an experiment in overlaying demo effects across video output. It looks like they've used grabs from movies here for the backdrops as there are scans of cars skidding and market places, although they must have had a video camera for some of the work as they put themselves into the film.

Very drab colours are deliberately used on this footage to make it stand out and combined with the creepy music which I thought was superb, its a very impressive piece of work. Well worth a look if you're after something a little different from the run-of-the-mill effects these days.

Available from: AminetPath: demo/aga/BZR_TV.lha

88 %

PD Utilities

public domain

From art through to Arexx there's something for everyone in this selection of public domain goodies as chosen by Anthony Brice. It's all here and at a knockdown price too. What more could you ask for? (cheeky replies not welcome)

NetSurfer volume 6

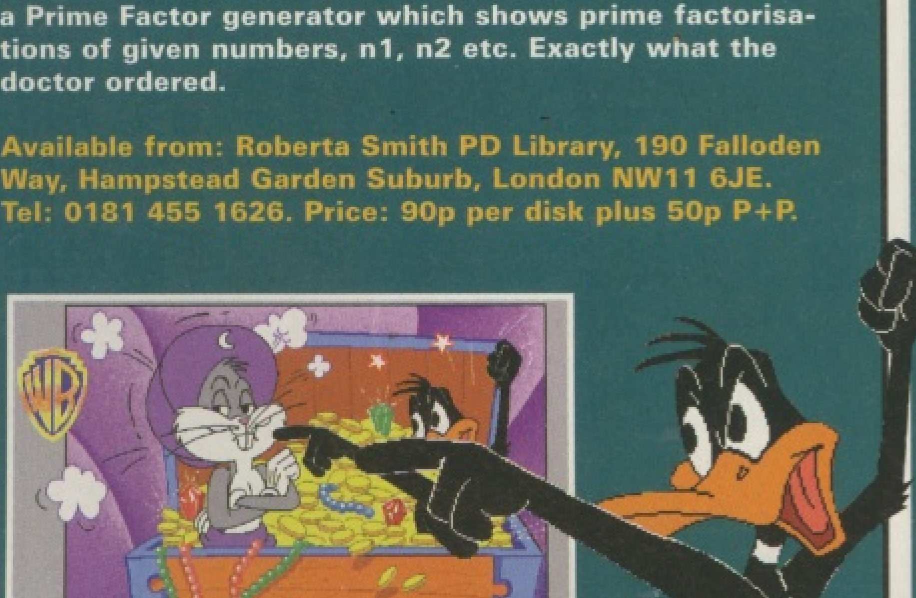
various tools

This is not, as the title would lead you to believe, a compilation of tools for the Internet. However, this disk has been obviously designed to have something that appeals to everyone.

For a start, AMOS owners will like it as there is an assembler for the serious code-heads as well as a starfield generator for shoot 'em up lovers. Unsurprisingly there is yet another new Trashcan (why do they keep writing these things?) similar to the Macintosh one which stores deleted files like a cache so you can access recently deleted files if you decide not to kill them after all. We also have AppMore, which performs specific functions with particular files when dropped onto its window, similar in style to Class Action (reviewed last month) but not as pretty.

As well as a disk tester there are a couple of disk tools as well, namely DosPrefs, which lets you use Unix wildcards and enable 'no-click' on floppy drives. Finally there is a module to sample conversion tool along with a Prime Factor generator which shows prime factorisations of given numbers, n1, n2 etc. Exactly what the doctor ordered.

Available from: Roberta Smith PD Library, 190 Falloden Way, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11 6JE. Tel: 0181 455 1626. Price: 90p per disk plus 50p P+P.

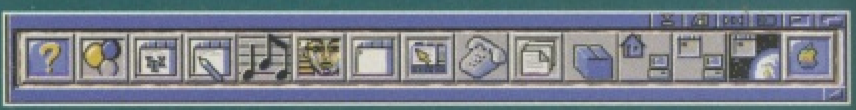


74 %

Utility of the Month

MUIRexx 2.1b

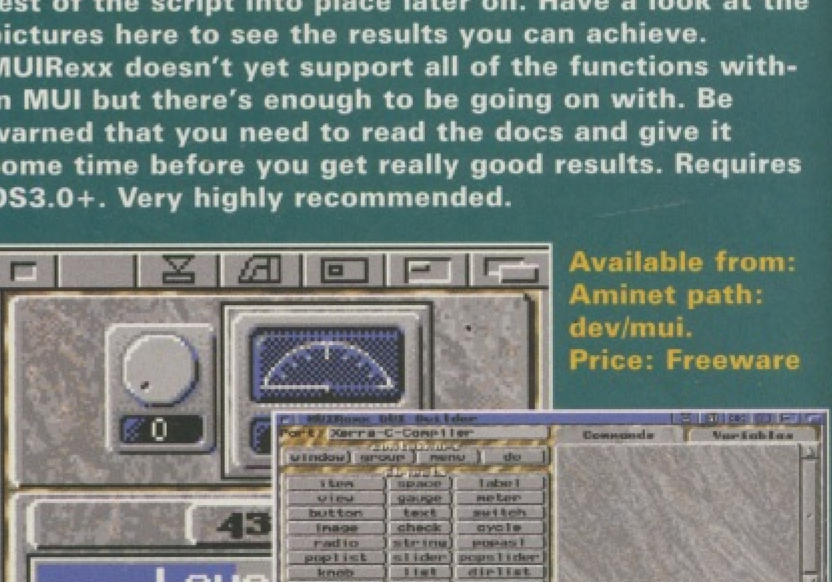
ARexx MUI app creator



Ever dabbled in ARexx programming? If not then skip past now. The same goes for those of you who hate Magic User Interface.

Still here? Good. MUIRexx lets you create front-end GUIs using the powerful features of MUI with simple ARexx scripts. A lot of programs now offer an ARexx port, allowing them to be remotely controlled from script files. This is ideal for automating tedious tasks such as image processing and batch operations.

It is actually possible to create full applications using MUIRexx, as the example demos prove but most people will probably use it purely to generate GUI front ends for scripts that control larger applications. To make life easier there's even a builder program to help you create the front end GUI so you can put the rest of the script into place later on. Have a look at the pictures here to see the results you can achieve. MUIRexx doesn't yet support all of the functions within MUI but there's enough to be going on with. Be warned that you need to read the docs and give it some time before you get really good results. Requires OS3.0+. Very highly recommended.

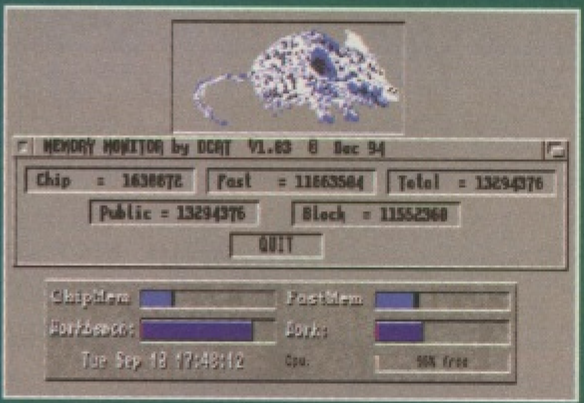


Available from: Aminet path: dev/mui. Price: Freeware

94 %

Of Mice and Mem

mice and memory tools



Another compilation disk, and what a great title. I booted this up expecting some badly spelled text file of the works of Charles Dickens but soon caught on. Of Mice and Mem is actually a group of useful tools and hacks relating to mice and memory, along with a program for handling assign requesters which seems strangely out of place.

The stuff here ranges from standard tools for displaying available memory, of which there are several, and a couple of handy commands for redirecting where the Amiga looks for mouse input so you use the joystick port if you've broken the original.

There are a couple of small hacks including one that lets you emulate a middle mouse button from the keyboard, and a very strange program that gobbles all your memory – useful for testing applications in low-memory environments. Personally I would just use MUI for that kind of task. It's rather good at it.

Overall there's not much here that you can't do with one of the commodities such as MCP or MultiCX, but it's a good compilation in its own right if you ever have problems with either of the two subjects covered, as one of the programs may be able to help you out.

Available from: Roberta Smith PD Library, 190 Falloden Way, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11 6JE. Tel: 0181 455 1626. Price: 90p per disk plus 50p P+P.

73 %

DoodlePaint 2.1

art package

DoodlePaint is a nice program flawed by the limitations of Amos, which was the programming language used for its creation. Easy enough to use, it has some nice graphical tools that usually only show up in superior commercial art packages such as Brilliance. However, it sluggish to use and the GUI is unfriendly.

Among the effects on offer are the usual freehand bits with lines, boxes, pattern-fills and circles. You also have more interesting effects like blur, spray and shapes, using triangle and rhombus which appear to be unique. You can even overlay starfields which suggests that these ideas have been bolted on through revisions as the author came up with them.

There are some options generally associated with more advanced software, like brushes (you can flick between nine that are stored in memory, which is clever) but there are major flaws. Changing screen modes results in the loss of the current picture, there's no spare screen and you're limited to IFF formats without AGA.

The documentation claims you can use HAM and later contradicts itself stating that it's not possible. It seems the latter is correct which is a shame as it limits the program severely. I can't really see much appeal for this in its current state but there is potential here if more work is put into it. Features like datatypes, multiple screen modes and AGA support are essential.

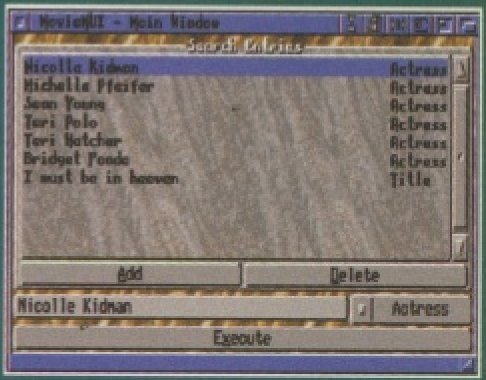
Available from: Online PD, 1 The Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby, Liverpool L37 3PX. Tel: 01704 834355. Price: £1 plus 50p P+P.



65 %

imdb3_4_bin.lha

Internet movie database (V3.4)



The Internet Movie Database (IMDb), is the most popular and well established resource for film information on the Internet. It is an international operation aimed at providing up to date film data, freely available on-line across as many systems as possible. It currently covers over 80,000 different movies. The database contains more than 1,000,000 filmography entries and expands continuously. For movie information, no other source of data even comes close to it yet.

Look out for version four of the browser which promises a lot of new features and should be with us soon according to the author. Naturally only film-nerds, like me, need apply.

Available from: Aminet path: misc/imdb. Price: Freeware

87 %

Helping Hands

hardware projects

Despite the horrible OS1.3 interface built around scripts and aged display tools to present info the information in this disk is well worth it. This is a veritable gold-mine for the technically-minded who want to improve their Amigas and don't mind getting their hands dirty. Be warned that the tutorials here are not for novice Amiga users, or people with no understanding of electronics, as most work entails breaking warranties by opening the Amiga.

These tutorials are mainly text files, some with simple IFF diagrams, covering fitting 3.5 inch hard drives into A1200s and using PC input devices like mice and joysticks. And there's a lot more. Those who revel in this kind of project will love Helping Hands.

Some of the text is a bit out-dated now, but I could have used it myself for the hard drive info a couple of years back. Recommended provided you can live with the horrible interface.

Available from: Roberta Smith PD Library, 190 Falloden Way, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11 6JE. Tel: 0181 455 1626. Price: 90p per disk plus 50p P+P.

83 %

CD AMIGA

Welcome to the section of CU Amiga Magazine dedicated to all things CD.

We kick off this month with a look at a CD-writing software and hardware combination, MasterISO and the Hewlett Packard 4020i: the gear used to create this month's Super CD ROM 4 and the previous two before that. Prices of CD-R drives are dropping like stones and there's all the software you need to do the whole thing from your Amiga.

CD-ROM Scene this month is dominated by DTP. There's DTP Toolbox which sees a re-release for ProPage 4.0, a new print designer in the form of Print Studio Pro and we take a sneak peek at a new drawing package called Draw Studio.

You'll also find a guide to this month's Super CD-ROM 4. Enjoy!

Cut your own CD-ROMs

Cutting your own CD-ROMs is now a realistic option for anyone with a bit of enterprise. We check out a combination of MasterISO software and a Hewlett Packard CD-R drive.



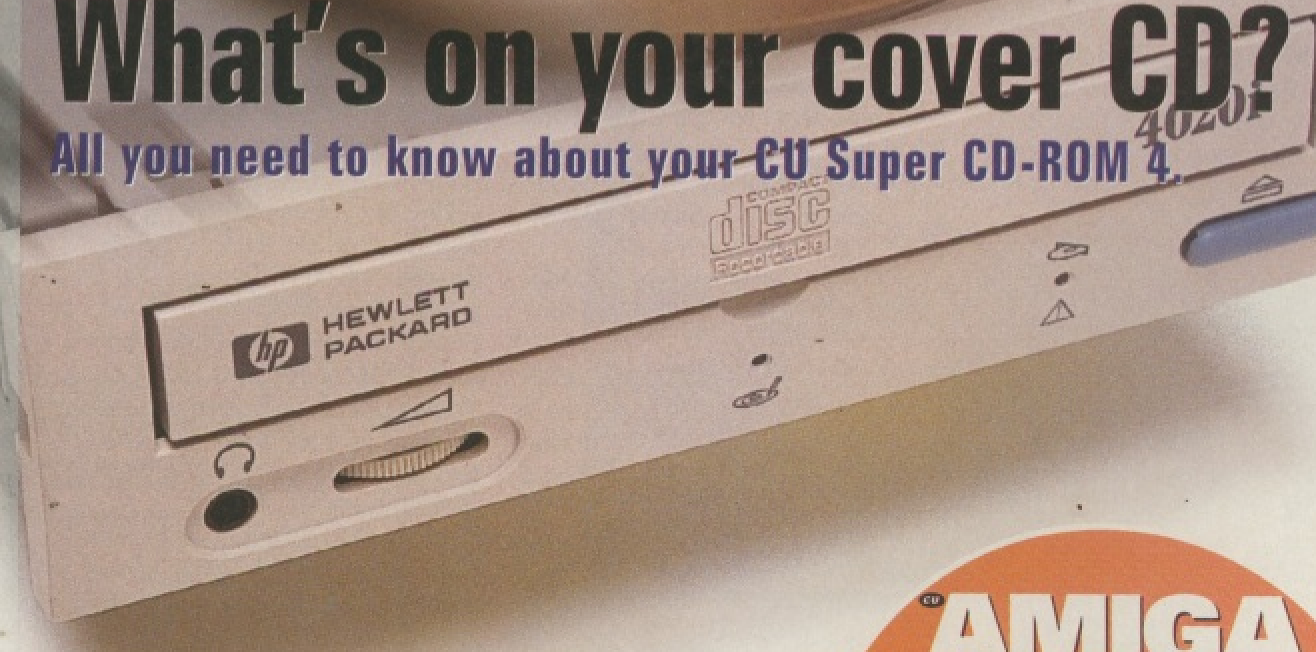


CD-ROM Scene

- DTP Toolbox
- Print Studio Pro
- Draw Studio

What's on your cover CD?

All you need to know about your CU Super CD-ROM 4.





Top CD-ROM! Read all about it on page 71

HP4020i & MasterISO

■ For price and details see box to the right

Mastering your own CDs is lot easier than you think once you have the right tools. We test two here.

Time's moved on for CDs and now they're the ultimate standard for reproducing large quantities of data cheaply. They're mostly read only but there are CD Writers (CD-R decks) which can write to their own special 'Gold' disks worth about a tenner a shot. The HP4020i is one such CD-R deck and operates as a quad speed read and a double speed writer.

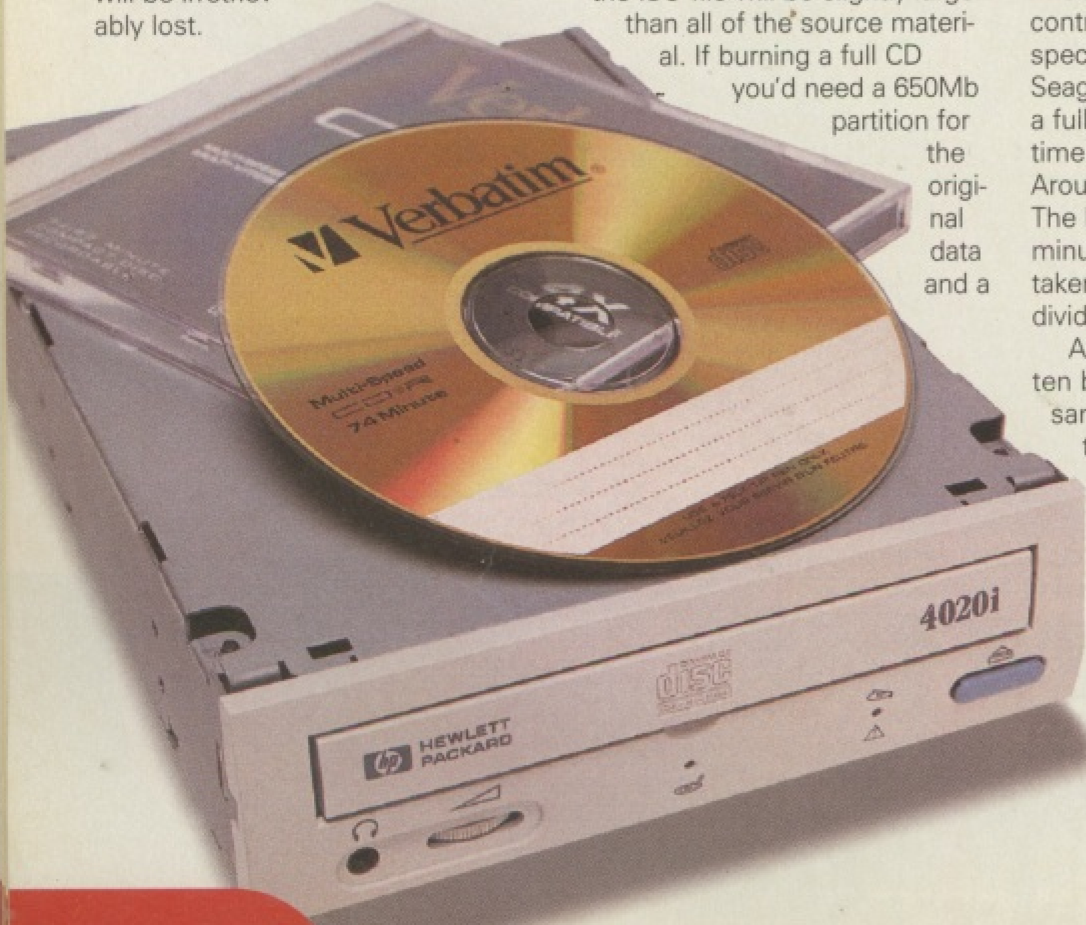
The HP4020i is a SCSI unit, though you'll need a quick SCSI interface to use it if the source drive and the CD-R are on the save controller. It's not so much of a problem if the source drive is on your IDE interface so that it doesn't use the same SCSI bus. Note, once CD-Rs get on a roll recording data, they must not be interrupted for even a second or the recording will be irretrievably lost.

Design wise the HP4020i is a standard looking CD-ROM drive with two status lights on the front panel. One indicates read/write operations while the other is a general status indicator.

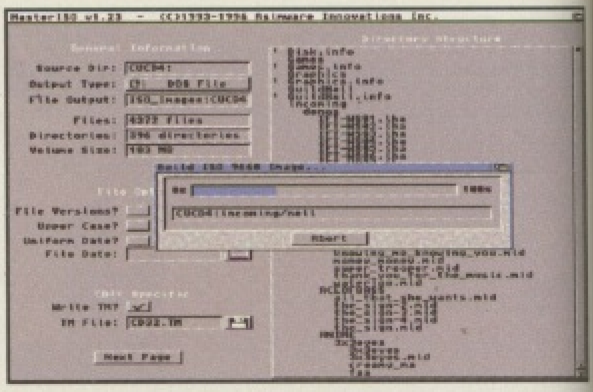
MasterISO

Only PC software is supplied with the HP so you'll need a copy of Asimware's MasterISO package which performs the dual tasks of creating an ISO disk image and writing the image to the CD-R. CD-ROMs don't use an Amiga filesystem, they use a filesystem called ISO 9660. The only reason CDs work on the Amiga is because CD drivers have an ISO 9660 file system built in.

MasterISO must read the entire source material for the CD and create an ISO image file. This means the ISO file will be slightly larger than all of the source material. If burning a full CD you'd need a 650Mb partition for the original data and a 700Mb partition or so for the source files. Don't buy a large drive since building the image will trash the heads about and take quite a long time two drives are better.



MasterISO only guarantees certain CD-R, SCSI controller and hard drive combinations will work while others will carry an element of risk. As a rule if the units match or exceed the specifications there shouldn't be a problem. Asim recommend such controllers as the Fastlane and DKB 4091 Zorro III SCSI controller. Add on SCSI modules for accelerators should be suitable and perhaps even some of the quicker Zorro II units. The PCMCIA Squirrel or Surf Squirrel units, however, are not of high enough specification.



MasterISO is the software that you'll need to burn (write) your own CDs.

Burning gold

We use the HP4020i with an A4000T and its built in 4091 SCSI controller. The hard drives are high specification but relatively cheap Seagate Medialist models. Building a full 650Mb image takes some time even with a 68060 machine. Around 15-20 minutes is the norm. The length of a CD is measured in minutes and seconds, the time taken to write to it is its length divided by two.

Audio tracks can also be written but first 16-bit 44KHz stereo sample files must be converted to raw CDDA format in the same way as building an ISO image. However, Asimware say that this limitation will be removed from the next version of MasterISO. Mixed CDs have the data ISO file loaded as track one and the audio tracks loaded after.

MasterISO sadly has a kludgy user interface which gurued when I tried to run it under my CGraphX RTG system. It's best to run MasterISO by booting with no startup-sequence; the Amiga's multitasking nature may take away valuable CPU time from the process of writing to the CD. It also cures any problems running on RTG systems.

Conclusion

MasterISO is not cheap, but it works well. Hopefully with a MasterISO update some of the more complex aspects of making CDs such as placing track markers in the middle of audio data will be implemented. Until then, if you want to get into CD writing on the Amiga, this combination is about the only option and thankfully it's quite competent. ■

Mat Bettinson

Shopping list

HP4020i is available from First Computer Centre, Tel: 0113 231 9444, Price: £599.99

MasterISO is available from Blittersoft, Tel: 01908 261466, Price: £103.96

MasterISO 1.23

OVERALL
Competent mastering software but lacking some features.
87%

HP 4020i

OVERALL
High quality CD writer but unfortunately a bit pricey.
81%

CD-ROM Scene

Welcome to the CD-ROM theme party. This time it's drawing and DTP. Anyone care for a sausage roll?

Print Studio Pro

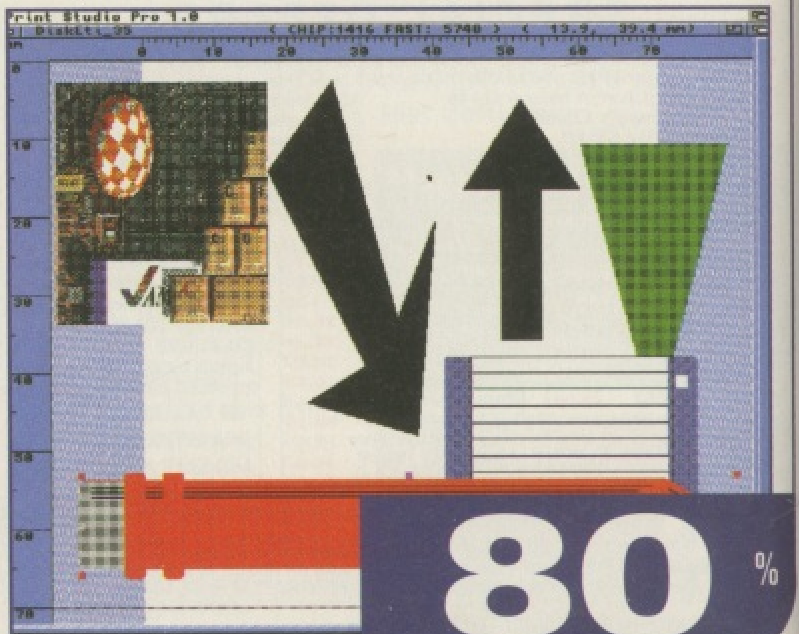


Printers eh? Don't you just love 'em? As well as using them for all straightforward jobs like printing out invoices with a little bit of imagination you can put your printer to all kinds of uses.
And what with the low cost of colour printers these days, it seems a shame not to adorn your possessions and stationery with customised logos and frills.

Print Studio Pro, the main program on this CD, is a kind of DTP system that's specifically designed for desk top printing, rather than publishing. By combing text, structured drawing and clip art elements you can build up pages of labels, forms, letterheads, coversheets and all that sort of thing. It's pretty simple to use. Once you've set up your page you can then import your various elements and arrange them on the screen using the standard DTP-style boxes and handles. As you've probably guessed already, there's a load of clip art and fonts on the CD to get you started. In
fact there's more than enough just to get you started, there's enough to keep you pumping out those labels for months.

Although you could do most of this with a good DTP program, Print Studio Pro is better suited to the job because it's not cluttered up with unnecessary options and memory-guzzling features. If you want to get the most from your printer, Print Studio Pro is very highly recommended.

Available from: GTI, Grenville Trading International GmbH, Carl-Zeiss Str. 9, 79761 Waldshut Tiengen, Germany. Tel: 00 49 7741 83040. See adverts in this magazine for UK suppliers and price.



80 %

Draw Studio

Here's a brief taster of a new package on the way from the authors of Texture Studio and Image Studio. Andy and Graham Dean have been at it again and this time they've come up with a structured drawing package that aims to knock spots off the competition. Draw Studio promises a list of features including various types of filled text (including bitmap patterns), text wrapping on curves, structured drawing tools, bitmap and structured combinations, transparent colours, exporting as EPS, aspect ratio corrected display and lots more. For now here's some pictures of the pre-release version.

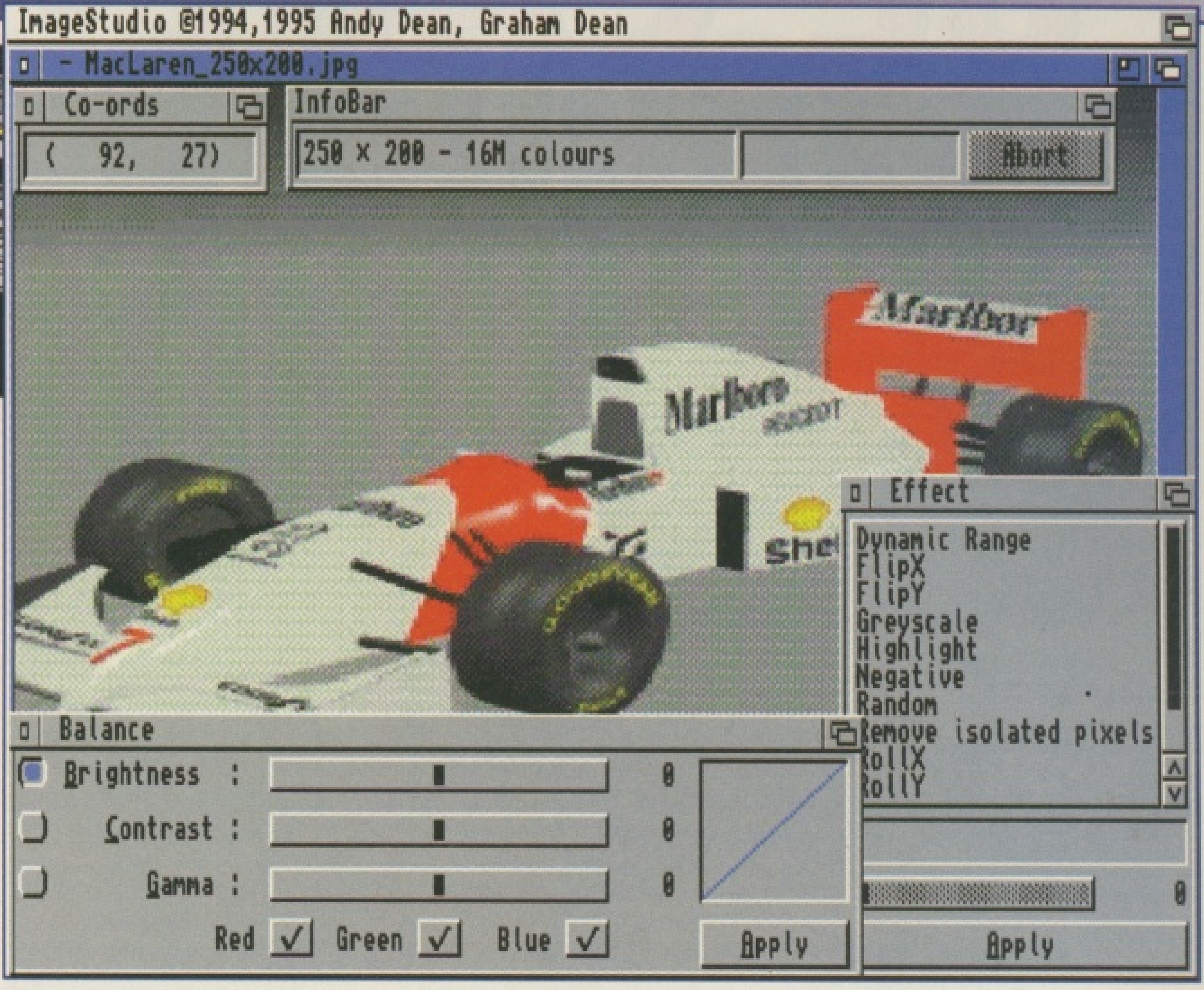




Draw Studio is planned for release on floppy and CD-ROM in mid-October. Watch out for a full review in the next CU Amiga Magazine. For more information, call LH Publishing on 01908 370 230.

DTP Toolbox





Since it absorbed Just Amiga Monthly magazine into its own EM magazine, LH Publishing has been the undisputed nerve centre of Amiga DTP. LH's main man Larry Hickmott will be familiar to most DTP enthusiasts, if not from EM magazine then surely from his DTP tutorials that seem to have found their way into just about every Amiga magazine on the shelves. It's fitting then that they've compiled this highly worthy stab at an all-in-one DTP solution CD-ROM.

Top of the bill is a complete fully functioning version of Professional Page 4.1. This acclaimed DTP package may not have seen anything much in the way of development over the last few years, it's still a sound piece of software and it works too, which is always a bonus. As is always the case with advanced DTP software, you'll need a fast CPU to get it working at a reasonable speed, otherwise you'll find yourself spending quite a while watching the screen redraw. This is not the fastest bit of software your Amiga has ever seen – a good 030 or faster CPU is recommended. While it's not in the same league as the Apple Mac's Quark Xpress it's still capable of producing professional documents, even entire magazines if your Amiga has enough speed, RAM and hard drive space.

All in one

There's no printed documentation for ProPage or any of the software on the CD which could present a problem for newcomers. However, you do get some comprehensive help in the form of an AmigaGuide document which tours the main areas of the program along with some quick-start tips.

Running at a far more manageable speed there's a cut down version of Final Writer included on the disc, Final Writer Lite. While this isn't as capable as Professional Page when it comes to big documents with all the trimmings, for less adventurous newsletters and presentations it's fine. Somewhere between a full-blown DTP package and a word processor, it's a lot quicker and easier to use, with less demanding system requirements. The interface is nice too, taking in elements of Magic User Interface without actually using it. If you want something to knock out neat looking documents with no fuss you can't go wrong with it.

An update to Professional Draw version 3.03 from version 3.0 is also included. Professional Draw 3.0 was included on the May 1995 cover disks of CU Amiga Magazine and this update fixes it for AGA compatibility. If you don't have that cover disk or the original program, LH Publishing say they have a few back copies of that they can supply. Professional Draw is a structured drawing companion program to Professional Page.

Those are the main players on the CD but there's also a supporting cast of smaller programs and tools that are bound to come in handy. Directory Work 1.62 is here to help out with moving files around, handling archives and so on. It's not everyone's first choice of a file manager but it's quite capable of sorting out those day to day jobs.

Pull together

On the image processing front there's Image Studio and GFX Lab. Neither of them are in the league of Photogenics but together they make a surprisingly powerful team, so long as you use the strong points of each program. GFX Lab comes equipped with an impressive array of special effects processes, while Image Studio is a good workhorse application especially for re-colouring, re-sizing and general re-formatting of images (Mat Bettinson swears by it). GFX Lab can be a bit temperamental though, especially if you try to run it straight from the CD.

Fonts and pictures are some of the main beneficiaries of the enormous capacity of CD-ROM. There's around 110Mb of fonts and about 230Mb of pictures. That should keep you going for a bit. The rest of the CD is filled with all kinds of useful bits and pieces, like printer drivers, archivers, ARexx macros, PageStream 3 updates, templates, picture viewers, MUI and plenty more.

One unique aspect of this CD is that every one ordered is specially cut onto a gold CD. This has allowed LH Publishing to offer a special service to all customers. Anyone who orders the DTP Toolbox CD can have up to ten floppy disks' worth of their own software included on the CD for no extra charge. More can be included for an additional fee.

If you're short of a good DTP and word processing package this should make an attractive option. With Professional Page as the main attraction, if you've already got yourself setup with ProPage or PageStream the rest of the CD is unlikely to tempt you at this price. However, considering what you get for your cash DTP Toolbox represents a good value DTP package on one neat little gold CD.

Available from:
LH Publishing, 13 Gairloch Avenue, Bletchley, MK2 3DH. E-mail: larry@em.powernet.co.uk
Tel: 01908 370 230.
Price: £39.95.

85 %

Inside Super CD-ROM 4



CU Amiga Magazine's CDs have earned a reputation for being the best top quality Amiga CDs available. Here's why.

How to use CUCD 4

As with prior cover CDs, CUCD4 can be used either by booting on a CD32 or A1200/4000 with adequate CD32 emulation. The CD will not boot under any Kickstart earlier than 3.0. If using the CD via Workbench and intending to run software directly off the CD then it's important to first click on the 'Init CD' icon. This sets up various assigns and makes MUI 3.6 temporarily available if it is not already installed.

It's worth noting that running software directly from CD is a touch-and-go business. While we've gone to a lot of effort to make many programs run from the CD, others may have to be dragged to your hard drive either manually or by running an included installer. 'Init CD' also runs the New Icons patch so don't be surprised if the icons change afterwards.



Audio tracks

This month's best modules are Compuspace by Dominic Smart and OutWipe by Paradise Decay. Compuspace is a four channel MED module and OutWipe is a Protracker module also only four channels proving you don't need multiple channel formats to sound superb. As last month, we've given the modules a subtle stereo image and then burned direct to CD as 44Khz 16bit audio. You can play the audio tracks either in your CD-ROM or a standard CD audio player but on the latter remember to avoid track 1 and go straight to track 2 for Compuspace and track 3 for OutWipe.

Have fun exploring CUCD4 and don't forget to send us any work of your own so we can include it on later CDs. Feel free to write into the magazine and tell us what you'd like to see on future CDs or how you'd like to see them organised. Address all letters to CD Editor.

A word on demos and games

Demos and games are almost never coded in a so-called OS Legal way. That means that while they may work for us, they might not work for you for several reasons. Either your hardware set-up is slightly different or some third party software running on your Amiga may upset the demo or consume resources that the demo/game requires. Please do not assume the CD is simply 'faulty' if any of this software refuses to run.

There are things you can do to make the software more likely to run. Closing down any running software, screens and such forth will free up resources. It might be better to cut to the chase and copy the demo/game onto your hard drive and then boot with no startup sequence. This involves resetting and holding down both mouse buttons, then press boot with no startup-sequence.

You'll then be placed into the AmigaDOS shell so you'd need to know enough about that aspect of your Amiga to navigate to where the software is and run it. As a general rule, if the game or demo still doesn't work then it's incompatible with your machine. If you get a requester asking for a specific volume then the software needs 'assigns' set up and so is fairly likely it has an installer that should have been run.

Generally driving CUCDs is as simple as clicking on an icon of something you want to run, play, see etc. You should find it will automatically activate a player, viewer or run the program without further ado. Of course if you access CUCD from a directory utility, then you can use your own preference of players, viewers etc on the specific files.

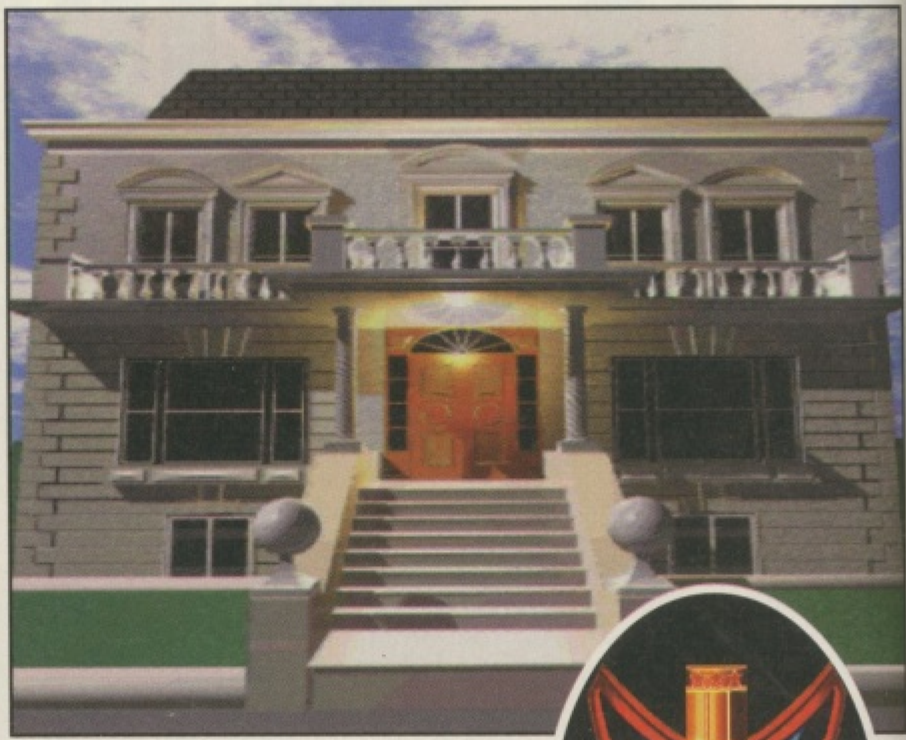
We can't emphasise enough the importance of clicking on any readme or other documentation files inside each directory. There's simply too much material for us to detail here so you'll have to explore, read the documentation and see if each program or whatever is of use or interest to you.

Turn over for your complete guide to your CD ▶▶▶

What's in your

When the Super CD 4 icon (called CUCD4) is opened from the Workbench, you'll see a smaller window than usual. This isn't because there's a lot less material, it's because this month's CD takes the different approach where the bulk of the material is in a separate 'CUCD' drawer.





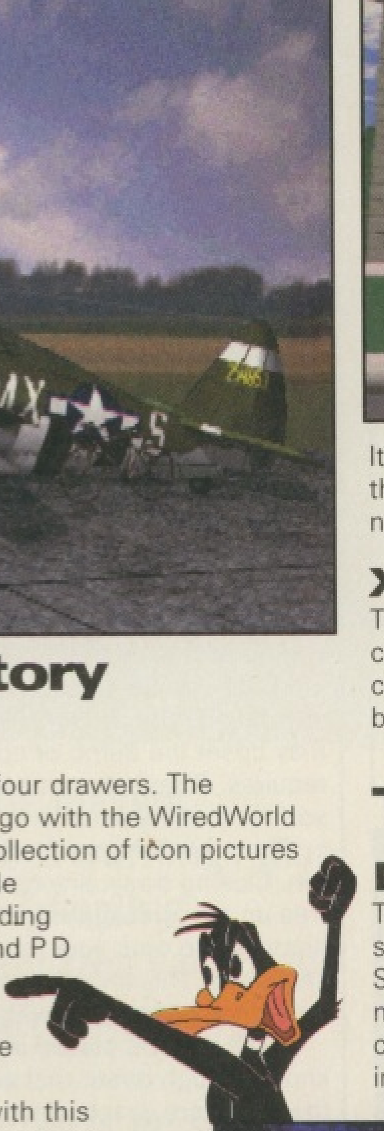
It's similar to last month only this time the MUI installed is version 3.6 and a new Delitracker is included



CUCD4 root directory

Magazine

This month the Magazine directory contains four drawers. The WiredWorld directory contains WhirlGIF to go with the WiredWorld tutorial in this issue. It's also got a bumper collection of icon pictures for Web page use. There's also some example AnimGIFs and HTML creation packages including WebPlug and WebDesign. The PD Scene and PD Utils drawers contain the DMS and LHA archives of the software reviewed in PD Utilities and PD Scene this month. Finally the Psion directory contains the AmigaNCP Psion to Amiga networking package to go with this months Psion palmtop computer feature. What's more there's virtually every item of freely redistributable Psion software included too all in LZX archives.



Workbench

The same as previous Workbench versions installed on CUCDs, it's a full installation of Workbench 3.1 minus the ARexx distributions.

Support

This directory contains many of the support programs and utilities used to play and view the rest of the files on the CD.

XCAD 2000

This directory contains the full commercial release of XCAD 2000 2D and 3D. It can be run from the CD but would be better being dragged onto your hard drive.

The CUCD drawer

Demos

This month we have a bumper collection of Scene Demos including the sequel to the CUCD2 massive Data World animation demo, Wild Summer. All of the Demos are unpacked and ready to run though they may need to be run by booting with no start-up sequence. Be sure to check the system requirements in any of the readme files present within the Demo drawers.





Information

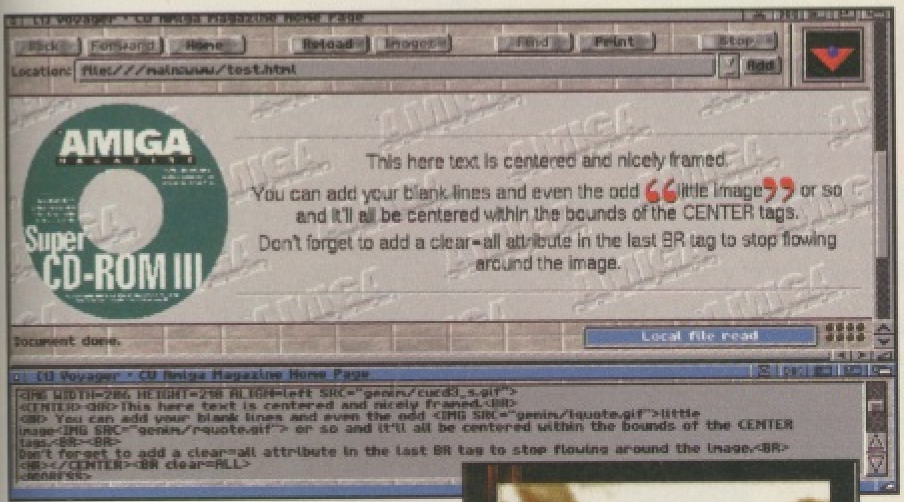
In this directory there's a collection of text and AmigaGuide documents ranging from a ShapeShifter survey to an entire stand-alone Star Trek database.

On-line

Dedicated to Communications software, a few select packages have been included such as the latest version of the 97% rated Miami Internet software, the YAM and Voodoo Email clients and a voice-mail package called SpeakFreely.

drawers







WWW

As with CUCD3, this month we have a massive collection of Web pages on the CD ready to view without the need of an Internet account. Accordingly demo versions of AWeb 2.1 and IBrowse 1.0 are provided to access the pages. This month's special is a monster collection of Amiga user's personal home pages from around the world.

Graphics



Unsurprisingly this directory contains all of the readers contributions related to graphics and artwork including stills and animations. What's more there's an entire sub directory of software for the Imagine series of rendering packages including some object converters and a good quantity of 3D objects. For those without Imagine, a RayStorm raytracer demo and the Grimm batch image/animation processor is included.

Readers Utilities

This now has its own directory due to massive amounts of quality applications and programs sent in by readers. There's a great variety of programs ranging from the simple to the complex.

CD-ROM

Support software for CD usage can be found here. The latest version of the superb PD AmiCDFS 2 filesystem, Megasearch which creates a database of your CDs and a CDID directory containing thousands of audio CD tracklists which when used with several audio CD player applications will automatically recognise CDs and allow you to add to the collection.

Sound

MIDI is the order of the day with CUCD4. The MIDI drawer contains the fabulous GM Play, general MIDI player software which uses Amiga samples. What's more it also has two sets of sample data, one for low memory systems and a very high quality set for those with 8Mb of RAM free. There's a massive collection of MIDI files here are well The rest of the drawer comprises of selected modules and readers modules sent in for CUCD4. The best module is also produced as an audio track on CUCD4.

Games

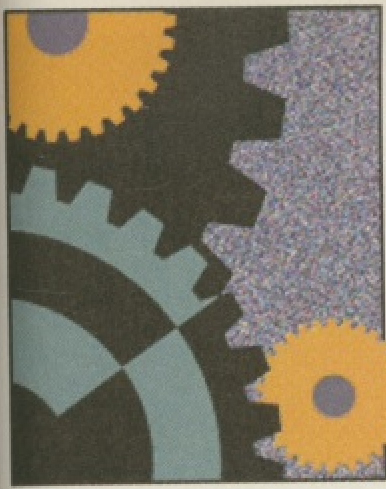


Entertainment central with a collection of PD and demo games and the readers sent-in games to boot. As always we can't guarantee that they'll work on your particular Amiga so please read whatever documentation is provided, checking system requirements and so on.





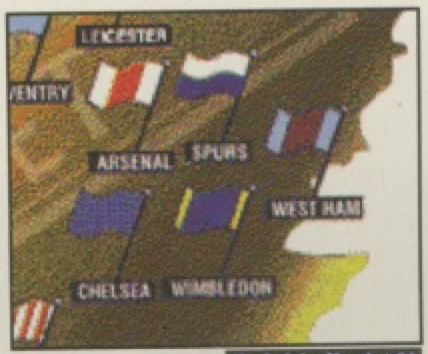
AmigaWorkshop



Everything you need help on to do with your Amiga is here. However, If there is something else you'd like to see that's not here, please write in to CU Amiga Magazine and let us know.



Imagine p78



Surf of the Month p84

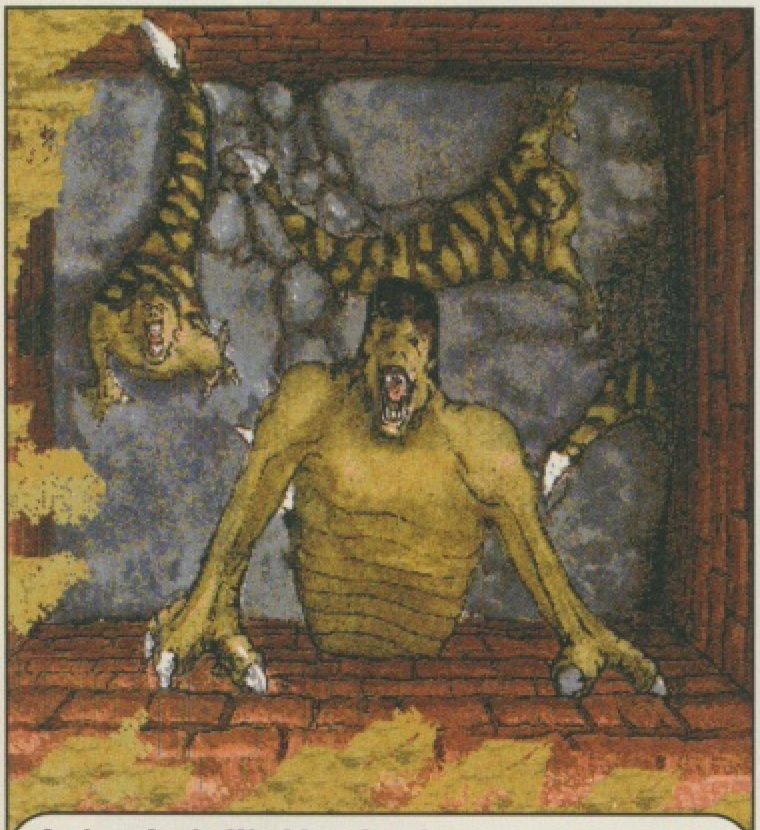


Masterclass p96

Feedback

Art Gallery

Thanks to all those who sent in their work this month. Remember to keep 'em coming.



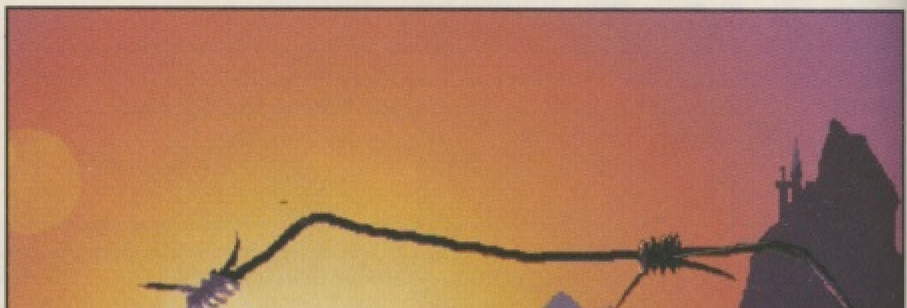
Artist: Andy Watkins, Leeds.
Amiga: A1200 Software: PPaint



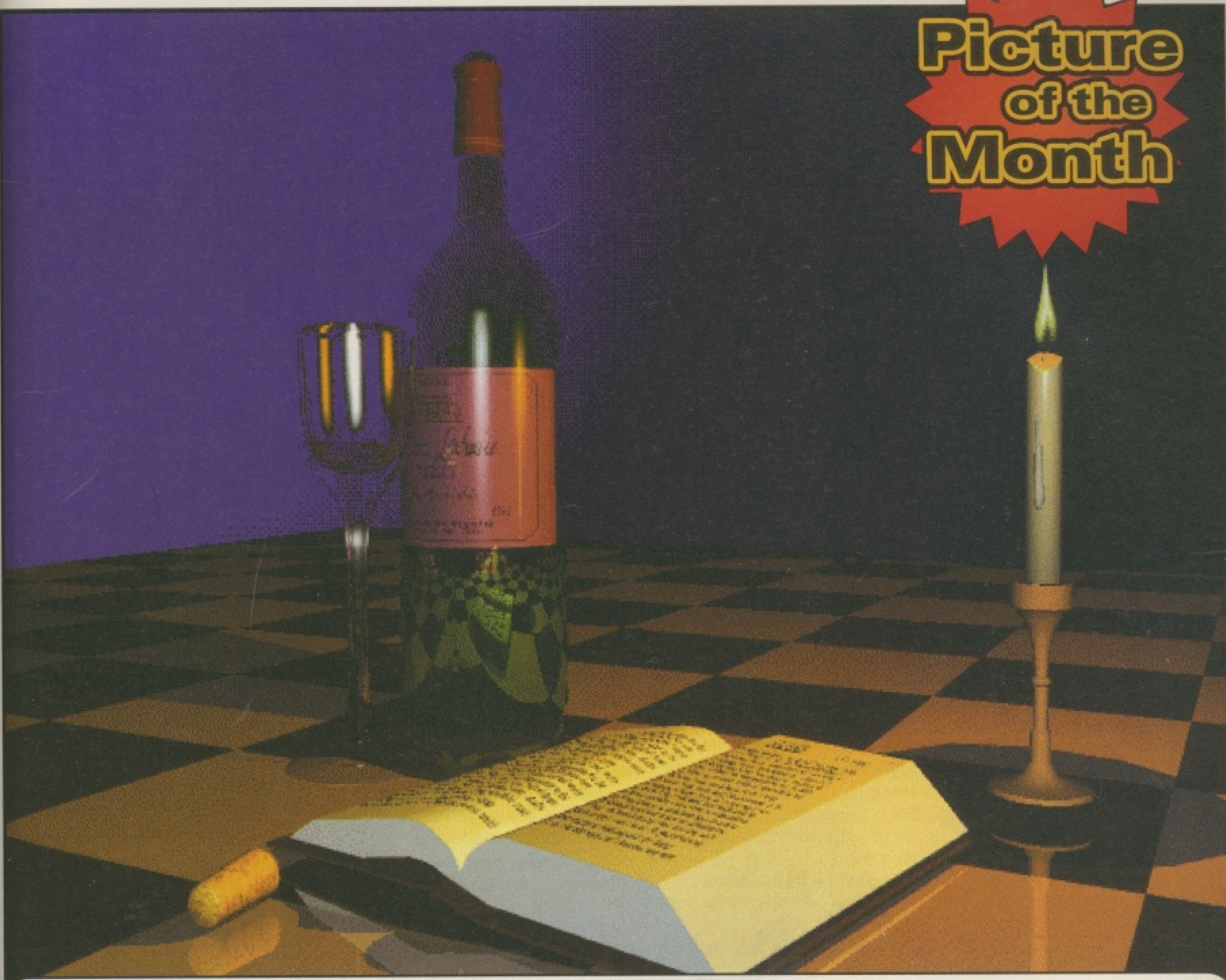
Artist: Girish Nath, Birmingham. (Copy of the The Chase™ stamp)
Amiga: A4000 Software: LightWave



Artist: Stephen Gardiner, CU CDIII.
Amiga: AGA Amiga Software: Imagine 3, ImageFX 1.5



Artist: Brian Smith, London.
Amiga: A1200 Software: Imagine



Artist: Brian Smith, London.
Amiga: A1200 **Software: Imagine**



Artist: T. Coleman, Nottingham. Amiga: A4000/030 with 060 6Mb RAM, Cyberstorm **Software: Imagine**



Artist: David Power, dpower@thenet.co.uk
Amiga: 14Mb A3000/25 **Software: LightWave**

Imagine 3.0

PART 10

Stars in your eyes but not in your animations. Here are three ways to create realistic-looking starfield effects.

If you have ever tried to render space ships with Imagine, you will have no doubt come across quite an irritating problem: stars. They just don't look right. Although the Globals menu in the Action editor contains a star density setting, there are several drawbacks with it. For example, stars won't appear through transparent objects, are all single pixels in size, are all pure white and refuse to animate properly.

To illustrate this, imagine (excuse the puns) that you are animating a space ship flying past the camera. The camera pans to follow the ship, but unfortunately the stars don't move as you pan so the illusion is ruined. And the fact that the stars are all single white pixels means that if you render something which you want to print later the stars come out either looking extremely boring and flat or even stand a very good chance of disappearing altogether. Luckily, there are ways and means of avoiding these pitfalls with stars and I'm here to show you how.

John Kennedy

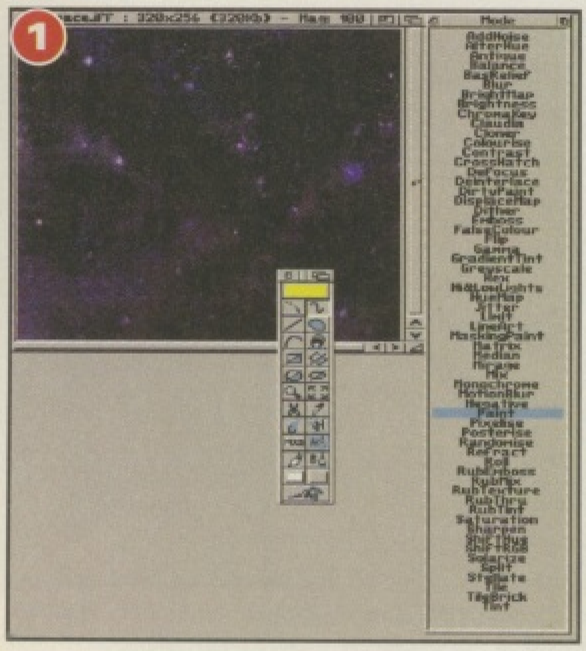
Solution one

First, perhaps the most obvious solution is to use a backdrop texture instead of the default star field objects. Depending on your artistic abilities or your access to NASA images, this can be a fantastically realistic way to spice up your images. Think of Babylon 5's lovely purple star clusters and how they stop the images looking dull.

Here's how to add a backdrop to your images. Remember that a neat trick is to use a backdrop that you've rendered previously. This will save on rendering time.

Step one

Create a starry backdrop using either a paint program or by altering an existing image. There are plenty of NASA images around such as those taken from the Hubble Space Telescope which are extremely colourful. It is essential to keep the backdrop the same size as the final render, so if you plan on rendering images of different sizes it might be a good idea to create a large backdrop (say 640 by 512) and scale it as needed (to 320 by 256 for example).

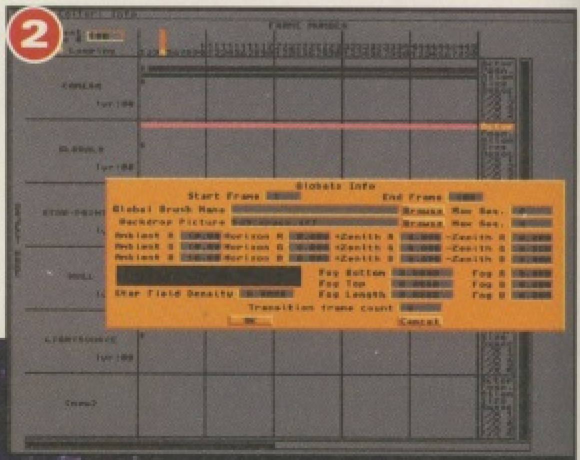


Step two

Create an Imagine project and after loading and positioning your objects, go to the Action editor. Open the Global settings and enter the path and filename of the backdrop image.

Step three

Render your project. You can use 256 or more colours if you like when creating the backdrop and Imagine will automatically reduce (or increase) the number of colours to suit the finished backdrop. Sometimes blurring the backdrop before you use it can produce very interesting results.



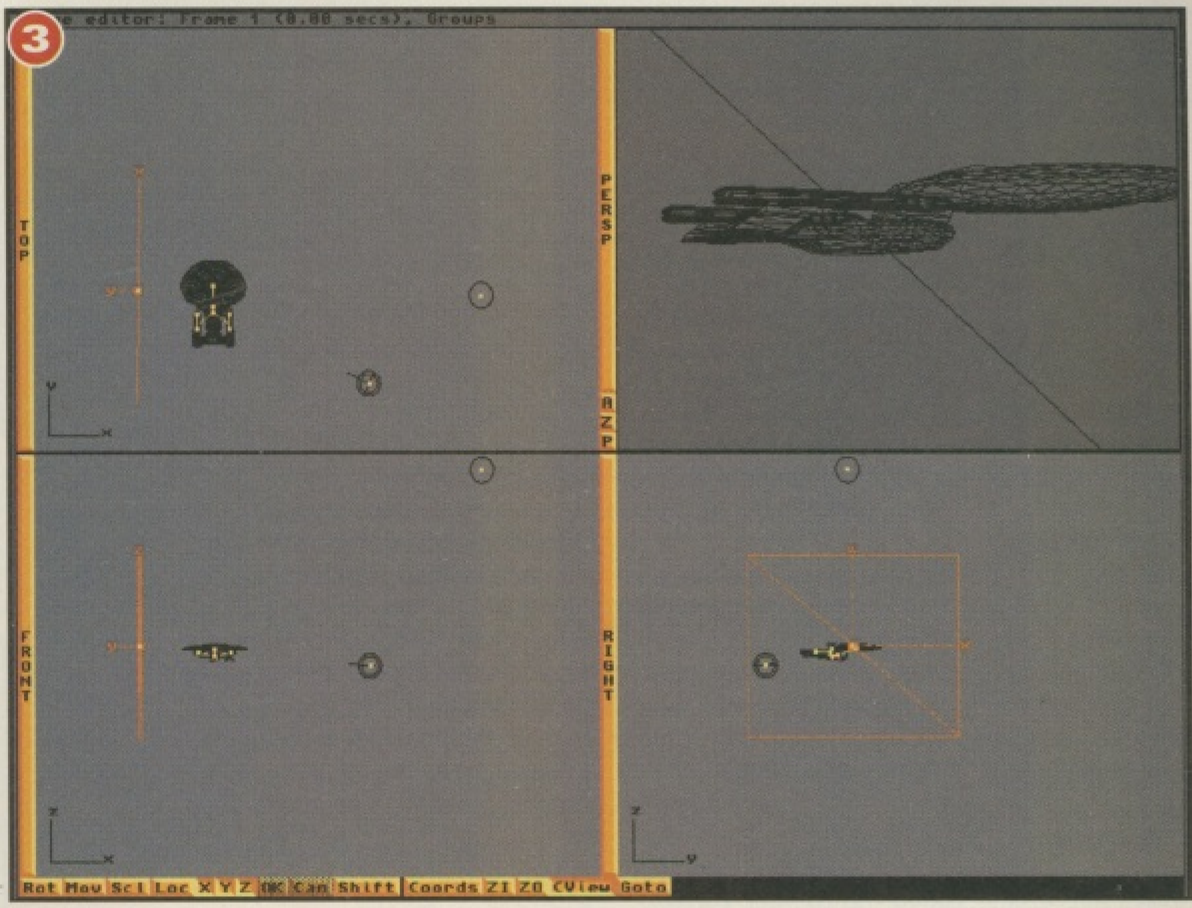


Solution 2

A backdrop might be OK for a still image but what happens when the camera changes position? Although you can animate a backdrop using multiple images, trying to keep in sync with camera movement is nearly impossible.

One exception would be a 3D star field moving towards the camera with an object, such as a space ship, static in the middle of the screen. You can create an animated star field using an Art Program such as Deluxe Paint, or try digitising the end credits to Star Trek TNG with ProGrab. By creating two animations, one with the stars moving into the centre of the screen, one with the stars moving towards the edges, you can create great chase scenes. Cut to a sequence with ship one, showing a view from above and behind, using the forward-looking star field. Then cut to a sequence of another ship, this time viewed from the front. The background stars are moving back into the centre. This gives the impression that the second ship is chasing the first.

However, a simple backdrop doesn't really suit animation. The second approach is to take the background texture and map it onto an object which can be shaped to suit the animation movements. A short pan from left to right might require a long rectangle, whilst a full 360 degree rotation might mean that you will need to map your design into a solid sphere and position your objects inside. This technique also has the advantage of showing through transparent objects. Here's how to do it ...



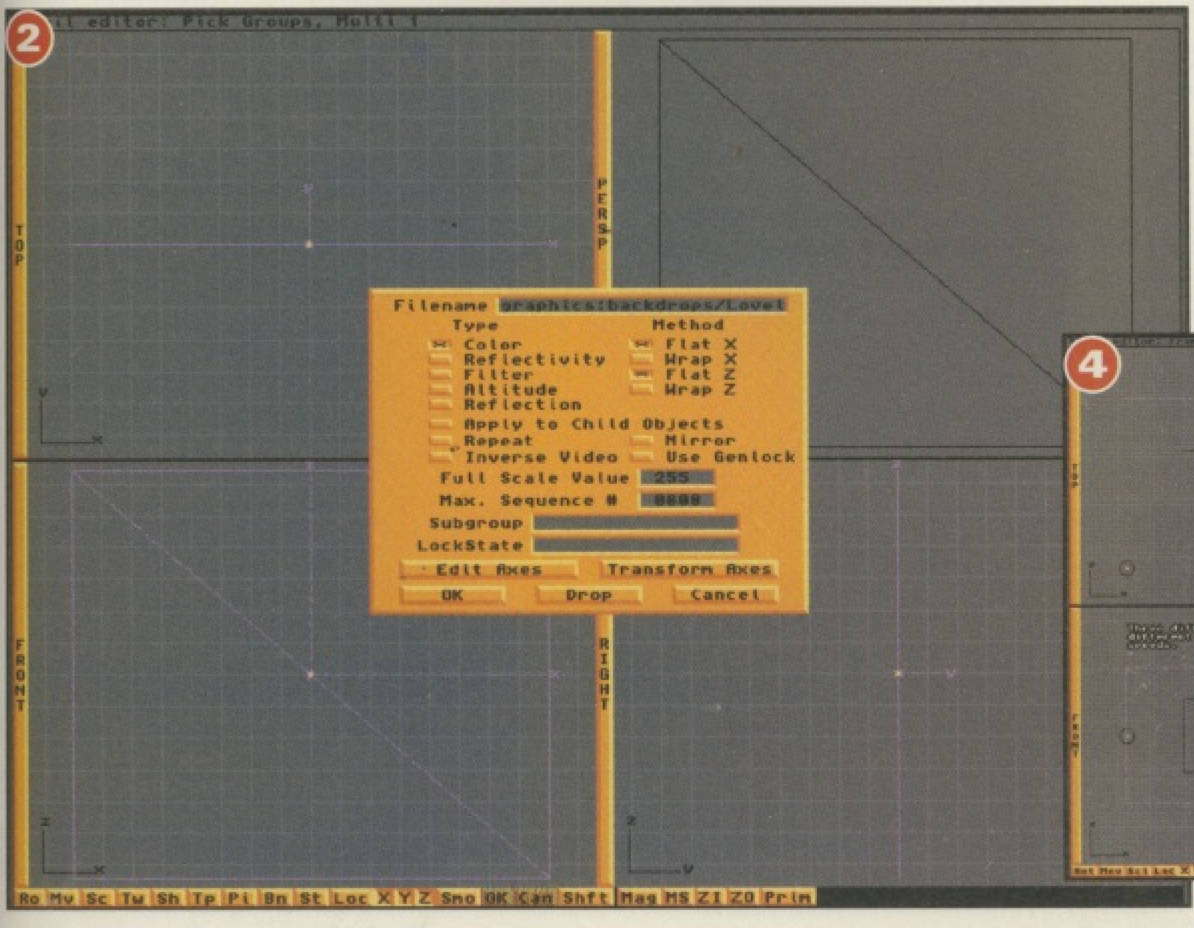


Step one

Create an image for the background, it doesn't matter about the resolution. In Imagine's Detail editor create a primitive plane to map the texture on to. Change the size to suit the resolution of the picture (if the image is 320 by 256, make the plane 320 units wide and 256 units high) and change the default 10 units to 1.

Step two

Now select the plane's attributes and pick Brush maps. Pick the background texture and keep to the default settings. Make sure the Bright setting is on: this will prevent the backdrop from being shaded and keep it uniform in colour. Now save your backdrop object.

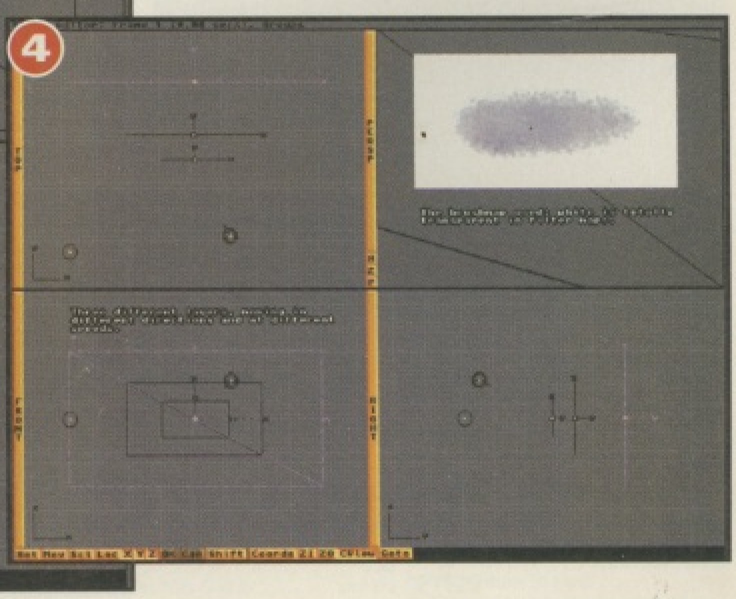


Step three

Turn to the Stage editor and load in the Plane object. Scale and position it behind the key objects in your scene, making sure you can't see the edges. Don't use lights which cast shadows, although a Bright background object will be immune to shadows.

Step four

If you are being adventurous, you can use the transparent colour option to create several layers of backdrop for a bizarre parallax effect. Make the backdrop pattern a Filter map (in the Brushmap selection window) and use a pure white backdrop with areas of darker detail. The white areas will be transparent, the darker shades more opaque. Now add lots more layers and move them at different speeds for an 'interesting' effect. Great for dream sequences and alien nebulous life forms.



Continued overleaf ▶▶▶

Solution three

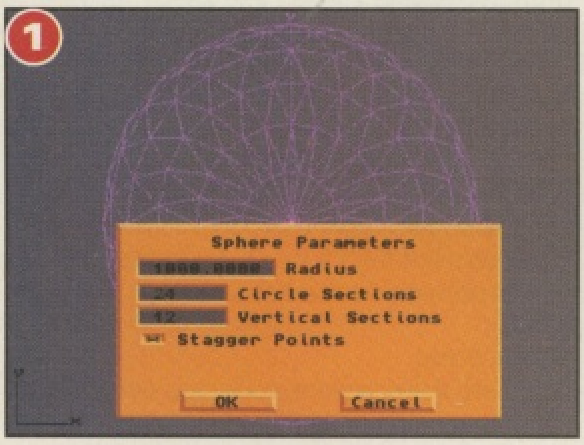
This final solution is my favourite, as it involves creating the entire universe as an Imagine object. As stars are really nothing more than points of light, there is absolutely nothing to stop you from creating several thousand small, bright objects. Nothing that is, except the three months it would take to do the job properly. Imagine creating an object, copying it, moving it and repeating it nine hundred and ninety nine times ... there just has to be an easier way.

There is, although it's taken me several years to find it. I wish I had thought of it, but I didn't: I read it on an old USENET posting so total respect to the genius who thought it up in the first place.

Here is how to create your own universe in a minute or so. You will need a sensible amount of memory to cope with all this (as you might expect, the universe is a big place) so if you get weird crashes try investing in some more Simms. About 8Mb of Fast RAM and a quick 030 is good to start with.

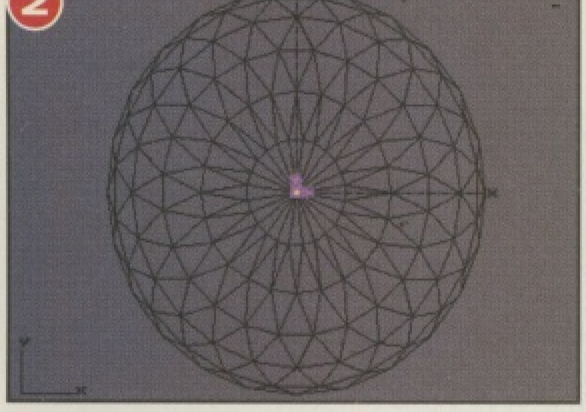
Step one

In the detail editor, create a primitive Sphere object (hit F5 and select the default sphere). Alter the size so that it's about 1000 units in diameter.



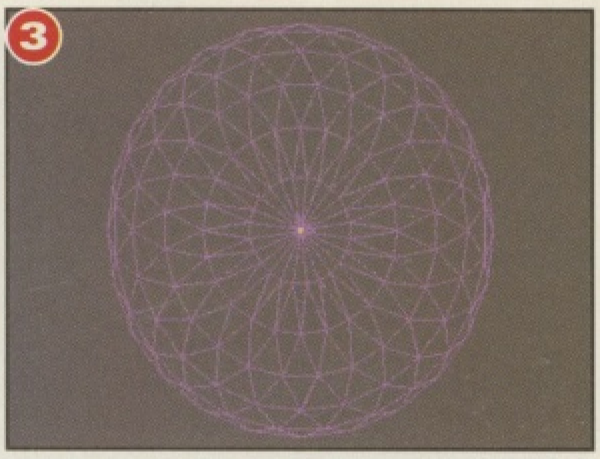
Step two

Use the Object menu, pick Add and select Axis. This gives our sphere an Axis and makes it a 'proper' object.



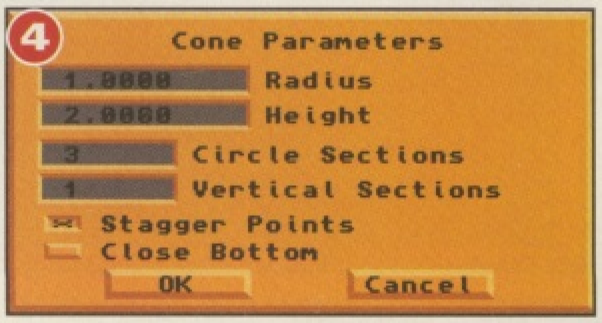
Step three

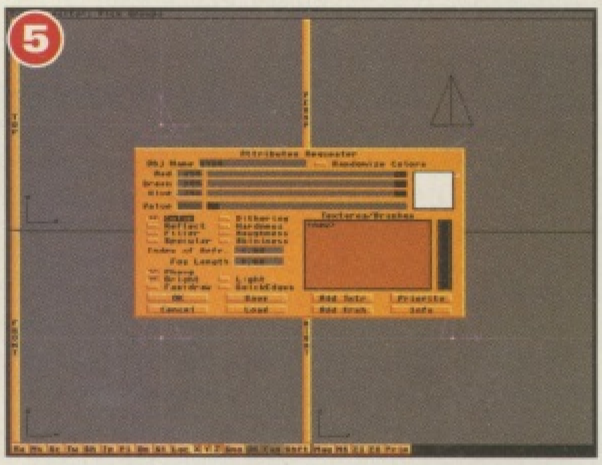
Select both objects and use Join from the Object menu. Now select Make Path from the menu too. This changes the Sphere from an object, to a Path which objects can follow (this itself is a wonderful concept to play with!)



Step four

Now create a single star. The object has to be as small as possible and that means a miniature pyramid. Use the Cone primitive, like this:



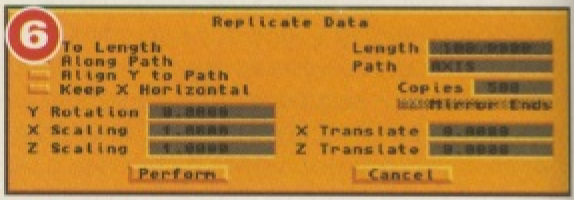


Step five

Alter the attributes of the star object so that it's white and bright. Later on you can create star objects with different colours if you wish.

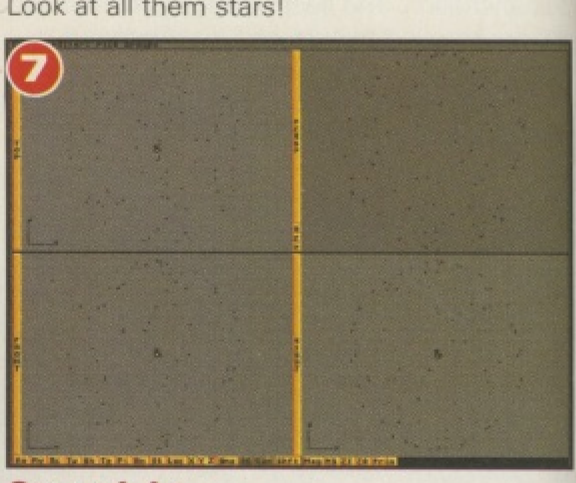
Step six

Now the fun part. Select the star object and then use the Functions menu, pick Mold and Replicate. Fill in the following settings (alter the 500 to a smaller number if you don't have much memory). Notice how the Sphere object is the path (it got renamed to Axis during the Join process)



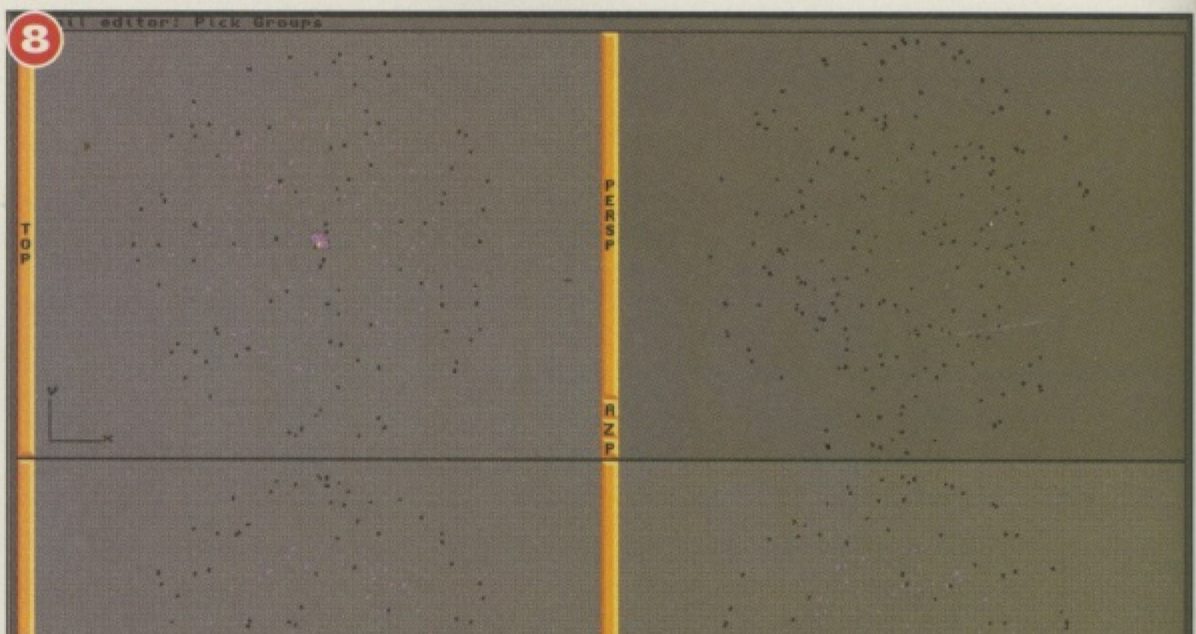
Step seven

When you click on OK the star object will be replicated five hundred times. You can now select and delete the original path. Whooee! Look at all them stars!



Step eight

Finally, copy the stars and paste them back again after scaling them and rotating them. Hey presto! One brill parallax starfield effect.



Wired World

PART 16

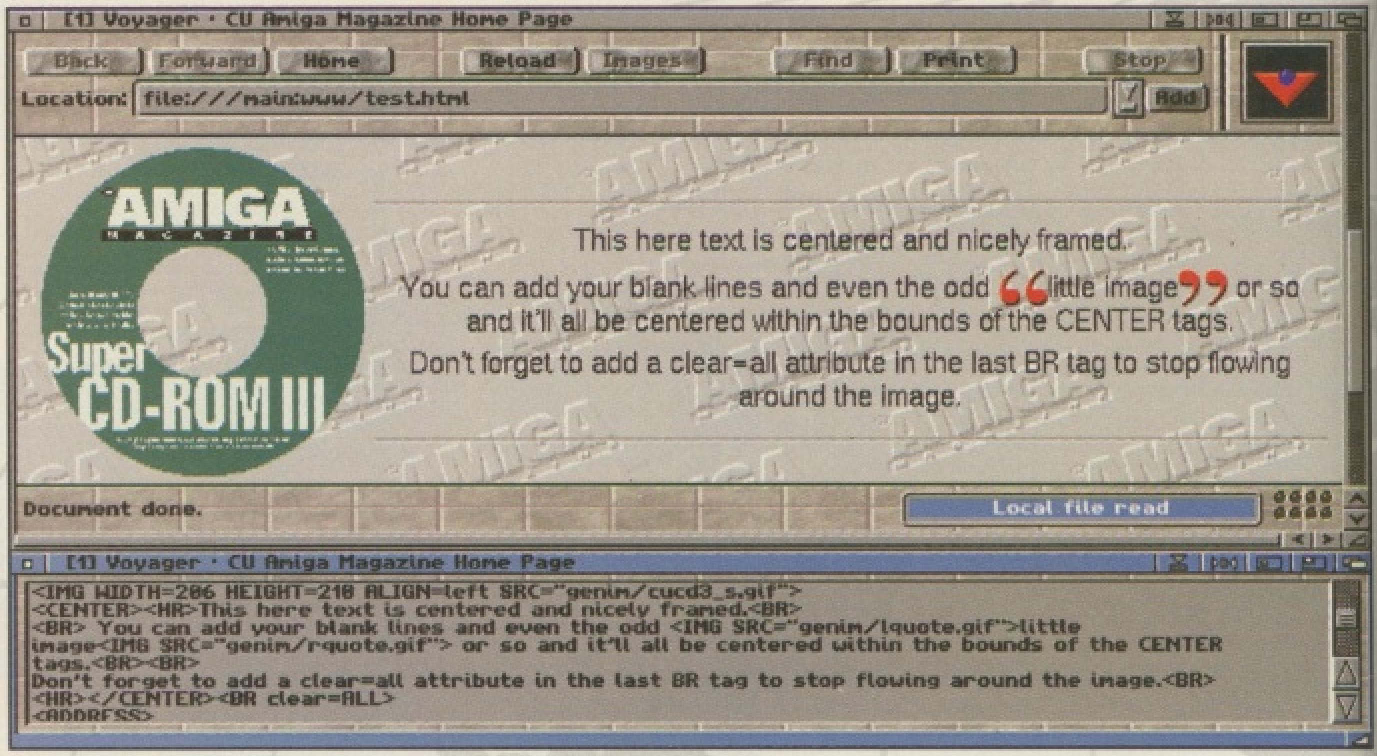
Pretty pictures on web sites are great but it's annoying if they take a long time to download. Here's how you can get around this problem.



After last month's advanced hocus pocus with Client Side Image Maps, we'll move back to some basics and then add some more advanced techniques later.

I've had a couple of Emails asking about text and image centring so I'll tackle this to begin with. There's a couple of ways to do this, firstly there's a 'Netscapism' tag called <CENTER> which does exactly what it says on the tin. You insert <CENTER> add some text and/or images and then terminate with </CENTER>.

One nice way of using <CENTER> is in conjunction with aligning an image to the left or right rather than simply centring the text above or below. You would do something like this with the following HTML;



▲ Here's a good example of using the <CENTER> tag. Note how it's centred in the space for text which has been wrapped around the image.

```
<IMG align=left SRC="somepic.gif">
<CENTER>This here text will be cen-
tred.</CENTER>
<BR clear=all>
```

This example will align the in-line picture to the left of the display. The text is then free to carry on wrapping around the image on the right as you would expect but it's now centred to the right of the picture. What's more, you can add nice <HR> tags for horizontal breaker lines and they will frame the centred text quite attractively.

Return to sender

The MailTo tag is one more Netscapism and a worthy addition to HTML which has been taken on-board by most other browsers. This is extremely common to add at the bottom of web pages so that people can Email comments directly to the author of the pages by simply clicking on the link.

The MailTo tag looks similar to a standard <A> link but takes the form of; <A HREF="mailto:joe@blogs.com">. This will tell the browser to start the process of Emailing joe@blogs.com when the link is clicked on. What's more, there's another handy field which can be added right after the Email address in the form of '?Subject=' and the subject of the Email which would make it easy to identify where the Email was launched from. For example;

```
Click
<AHREF="mailto:joe@blogs.com?Subje
ct=WWW">here</A> to Email me.
```

The word 'here' will be underlined as usual with a link and the Email will have the subject of 'WWW'. It's important to note that this is met by a varying degree of success depending on the browser involved. AWeb and Voyager will need scripts to launch existing mailers while IBrowse and the PC posse has the Email functions built-in. There's nothing to stop you from using an image as usual, perhaps a picture of an envelope, just make it clear that it will Email the person involved.

An extra boost

Now we'll move on to an advanced topic and one which has taken the WWW by storm. It's one thing having pretty web pages but they can look a little static and this is where a little bit of animation can work wonders. Animating a small aspect here and there can give the documents a little extra life. To create some animation you need AnimGIFs. However, AnimGIFs aren't very efficient as an animation method so you must be spartan when using them or risk annoying your visitors.

Currently the only Amiga browser to support AnimGIFs is the commercial IBrowse from HiSoft but the others should implement support for it before too long. This doesn't offer too much concern since the first frame of AnimGIFs will be displayed on browsers not supporting the standard.

Firstly, we'll need a tool to create AnimGIFs and since this is a fairly new development, there's no decent native Amiga software available. Fortunately, there's a port of a Unix command line (shell) driven tool called WhirlGIF which can handle this. WhirlGIF can be found on the CD in the Magazine/Wired World drawer or on the Aminet in the path; gfx/conv/WhirlGIF20.lha

To work properly WhirlGIF needs individual frames of the animation in GIF format (it doesn't matter whether they're 87 or 89a types). The frames should be of the same size and use the same palette. This can be tricky but exactly how you do this really depends on the graphics manipulation packages you use. One



▲ Unfortunately a static screen grab can't do this AnimGIF justice. The lightning bolt shown here through the CU Amiga logo dances around courtesy of ImageFX 2.6 and the 'randomise' button.

technique is to set the palette to something which should cover all of the frames, load the images as brushes and remap the brushes to the screen palette. PPaint and DPaint can deal with this easily.

WhirlGIF should be driven in the shell with something looking like;

```
WhirlGIF -o animgif.gif -time 50
frame1.gif frame2.gif ...
```

The file animgif.gif here is the output AnimGIF and the value after '-time' is the amount of time that each frame will be displayed in ticks, so 50 is one second. The raw input GIFs are then specified from first to last. If the AnimGIF is to be transparent, the transparent colour should be the same (ie the background) on all frames. An additional argument of '-trans' followed by the number of the palette which is transparent, will be required. You can tell this from your paint package.

It's even possible to specify the time variable for each frame in case you want to have a single frame displayed longer or shorter than the rest. In this case a full example might look like this;

```
WhirlGIF -o animgif.gif -trans 0
-time 20 f1.gif -time 30 f2.gif
-time 40 f3.gif
```

The resulting AnimGIF can really only be tested inside IBrowse so simply create an in-line graphic and specify the AnimGIF. It's still a good idea to use the width and height tags, you may as well let the browser lay out the pages correctly while it waits to load the AnimGIF.

Billboard effect

So what sort of things might AnimGIFs be used for? One common but simple method is to have just a few frames sporting some changing text banners. Done correctly, this looks like a kind of stadium billboard which is quite useful for maximising impact and space. This is quite common on web searcher sites now where every advertiser is allotted a single GIF. Other more interesting uses could be to add a touch to a logo such as on SASG's superb web site at http://www.sasg.com. Note the spinning globe at the top.

Unfortunately in this case the webmaster has used some PC software which isn't available on the Amiga. The AnimGIF standard lets you animate only a portion of the GIF while using WhirlGIF you'll have to include each whole frame so it's best not to try and replicate what SASG have done with their spinning globe until some proper Amiga AnimGIF processing software appears.

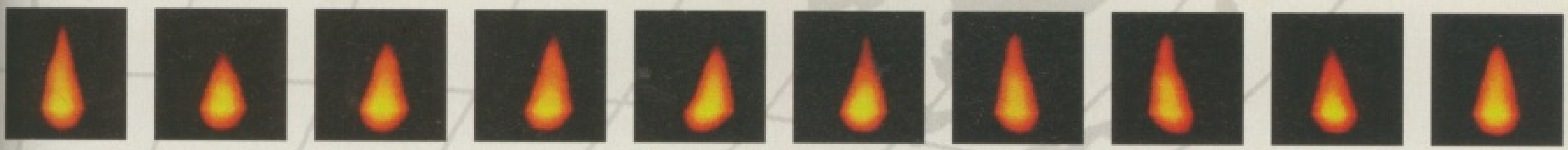
However, SASG's glowing help button is a good example of how a large-time value before a faster sequence of frames is used to achieve the rising and falling luminosity effect. SASG's Tiny rotating bullet points is another excellent example of AnimGIFs. This kind of thing could be easily created in DPaint using the brush moving function Spin, Twirl or otherwise a small arrow. Colour the 'other' side of the arrow as it turns and save out the individual frames. Then convert the frames to GIFs before giving them the WhirlGIF treatment.

Why not go the full monty and drag out your copy of Imagine from January's copy of CU Amiga Magazine? Load a postscript font into the spline editor's Load Font function. Choose add points, extrude the font some, then save out the points as an object.

Try Imagine's detail editor for applying a nice attribute such as gold too. This text object can then be animated as per John Kennedy's tutorials on the subject. A simple rotation would do. There need only be 10 or so frames and the output renders would only have to be 50 x 50 or so which will make for extraordinarily quick rendering. However, after converting the frames to an AnimGIF, you could have rotating 'NEW' graphics which actually sparkle as the edges pass the camera. There's no limit to what you can add to a Web page given a little bit of imagination and some restraint concerning the frames, colour depth and size of the image. ■

Mat Bettinson

GIFs and the Amiga



It's a shame that the AnimGIF has appeared as the most common simple animation standard for the Web. Not only is it not a very efficient standard but it has the same legal problems as the standard GIF format with the Unisys patent etc. This means it's increasingly hard to find new software which has support for the GIF file format built-in. Many, like Cloanto's Personal Paint and Nova Design's ImageFX, have used the freely redistributional modules approach. That means that the loader/saver modules aren't present in the actual package but are available to anyone free of charge. This gets around a license code needing to be paid for the use of GIF. These modules are of no use to anyone else but owners of the package in question but if it keeps the price down who's complaining? ImageFX is no longer shipped with a GIF loader/saver but it can be found on the Aminet in the path biz/patch/ifxgifb1.lha This is a superb implementation of the GIF standard with full progressive and transparency support. By using ImageFX's effects, an original frame can be modified, saved as a GIF ready for WhirlGIF, the undo function applied, the effect altered slightly and so on.



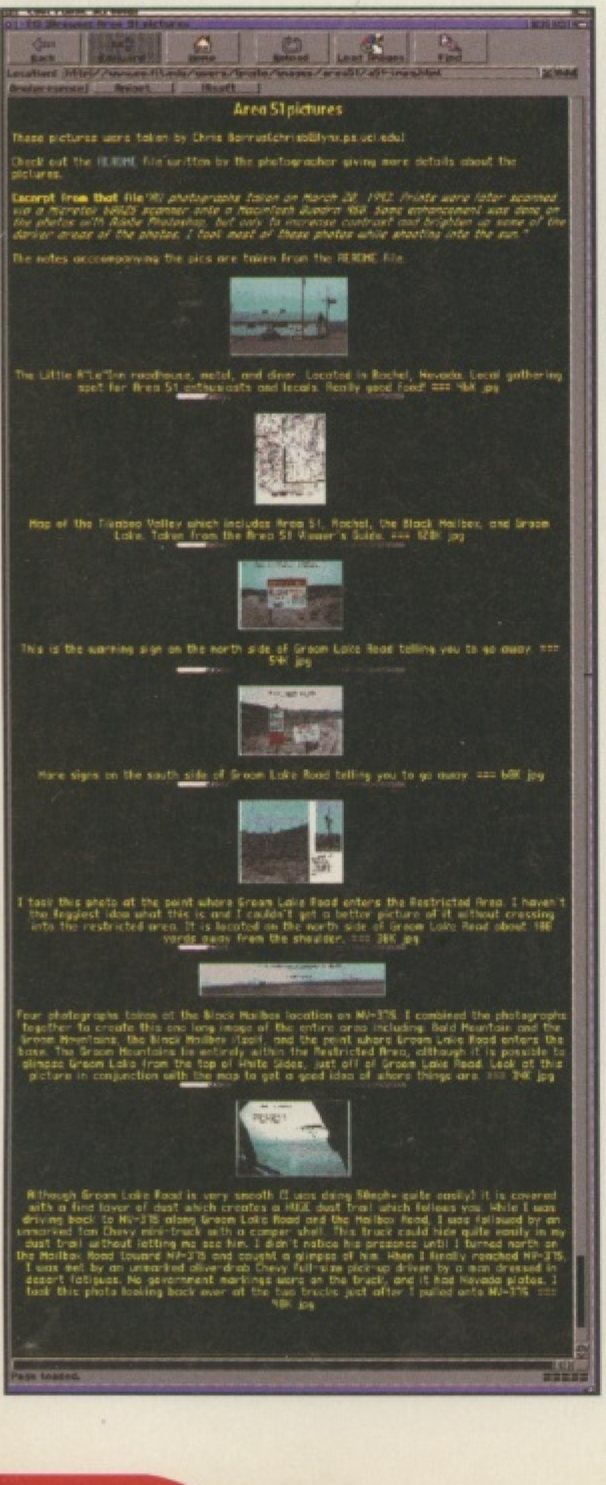
Surf of

In the first of a regular new series we take a trip through the World Wide Web to uncover some of the more useful and entertaining sites out there ...

First port of call for any free-range surfing session has to be a good search engine. We've put our faith in the old favourite 'Yahoo' to point us towards some cool corners of the Web, digging into the entertainment/paranormal section to reveal some UFO sites. From here we've chosen to kick off with a tour around the notorious 'secret' US Air Force base known as Area 51, a remote dry lake bed used to test new military aviation technology. The address is: (www.ee.fit.edu./users/lpinto/sec-a51.html).

Located in the Nevada desert, Area 51 was of course the location of the Roswell Incident, in which it is alleged that aliens crash landed their spaceship and were then taken away to the nearby military installation for examination. The official comment from Area 51 has not been consistent, and the incident has never been explained, leading to hundreds of different theories from UFO enthusiasts. Personally I reckon the crash was simply a prototype aircraft (presumably there are plenty of these at an Air Force site which 'tests new military technology') and that the subsequent film footage of the aliens' post-mortem was a pretty daft fake. Spooky eh? Well, it's a theory anyway ...

There are some photos of the area taken by a visiting UFO fan which include shots of the



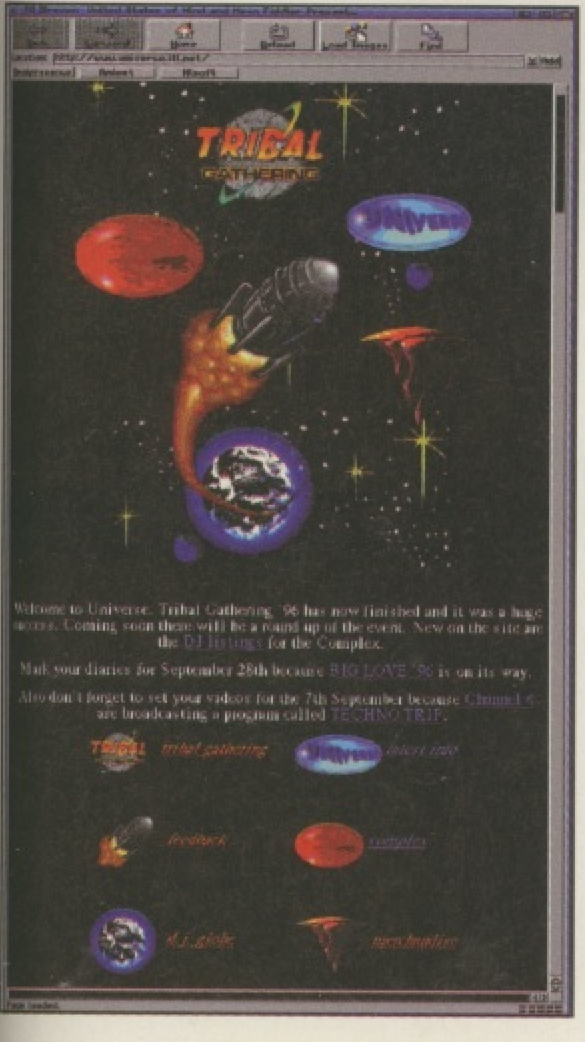


the Month

signs warning people of arrest if they enter the area, a 'strange construction' peeping over a hill, and the local diner cum motel named The Little Ale Inn. Previews are displayed on the page, with bigger JPEGs available from a mouse click. Cycling back a page or two will get you back to almost limitless links to other UFO and paranormal sites which should keep fans going for hours on end.

Now for something completely different

The club and festival organisers Universe have a particularly nice looking site with details on previous and forthcoming events. Although at the time of writing it's still adorned with the Tribal Gathering graphics (the year's top dance music festival) it's got useful information for any techno and house fans in the London area, with full listings of the DJ line-ups for their club nights at the Complex club in Islington. We've picked it out here mainly because it's got some of the best graphics of any of the sites we've visited this month – look: no drop-shadows!
You'll find it at http://www.universe.itl.net





Net-buster

This month's Site of the Month is the official Carling Premiership site. Unlike many others it's not cluttered with useless sub-pages, but gets straight down to the business of serving up facts and figures on all the teams and results from the Premier League. It's a nice, simple site, combining decent graphics and all the right info without trying to be a complete on-line football magazine – a slick site without the usual filler sections.
You'll find it at http://www.fa-carling.com

Show us yours!

Have you got a site you think we should include in a forthcoming Surf of the Month? Maybe it's your own or maybe you've just stumbled upon its greatness in your global net travels. If so, let us know by E-mailing us at general@cu-amiga.co.uk. Alternatively, check out the CU Amiga Magazine web site at http://www.cu-amiga.co.uk and drop us a line there.



Net God speaks

There have been some disturbing events on the UK Internet of late. I refer to the great debate of Internet censorship. Some are claiming a victory over Demon Internet Services being forced to agree to block certain obscene newsgroups. Banning the material, however, is not the answer as it will not eradicate the problem and can be gotten around by wrongdoers. For example, an obviously titled newsgroup for illegal pornographic material was banned but then promptly renamed to alt.disney so it could pass by undetected. If this kind of thing happens more and more people will accidentally come into contact with the disturbing material. The real solution is to catch the individuals posting the obscene material and not to censor the forum in which it is carried out. Those people are breaking the law in their country of origin and should be caught and punished by their own authorities. The police should Email their international counterparts who have jurisdiction over the wrong doer and have them arrested.

Surf's up!

Censorship reaches the Net, PIOS hit out out at VIScorp, OctaMED author is flamed and rumours abound about Microsoft.

Microsoft on Amiga?

Rumours that have been circulating that Microsoft is looking to port its free Internet Explorer (IE) browser to the Amiga.

This would be welcome news as IE 3.0 has recently overtaken Netscape as the most popular browser in the world though to date it has only been available in Microsoft Windows and Macintosh versions. We asked Microsoft's head of the IE project whether the rumours were true. A Microsoft representative, Yusef Medhi, replied: "As of now, we have no plans to develop IE for the Amiga. We are always listening to our customers and if the demand comes in we will reconsider our plans for the Amiga platform".

Some have argued that Microsoft's products on the Amiga would be too large like their PC software, though if the Amiga did have a port of IE it would have an industry standard browser capable of tables, frames, animgifs and Java etc. If this sounds good to you, then please drop Yusef a line on yusufm@microsoft.com and state your case.

PIOS parting shot at VIScorp?

PIOS' web site has been updated with some rather interesting tidbits. First there is a statement about an inability to secure a 'working agreement' with VIScorp. Secondly there is an announcement about their forthcoming PowerPC machines.

Interestingly, these machines will be running MacOS and no announcement has been forthcoming on the availability of an AmigaOS port.

With the current statement concerning VIScorp it would be unlikely that PIOS would actually be free to port AmigaDOS to the PowerPC. This either leaves PIOS to implement a 'compatible' OS ala Phase 5 or to stick with MacOS.

Recent rumours suggest PIOS are looking at the Bebox's proprietary operating system. This is an odd move since as yet it has no significant software support. Perhaps here's where PIOS parts company with Amiga users? Drop in and decide for yourself at http://www.pios.de

FCI offer 5Mb of Web space

In response to a users' petition InternetFCI have increased allocated Web space from 512K to 5Mb per user! That's a 10 fold increase which makes InternetFCI and Demon the only two ISPs to offer such space on a dial up account.

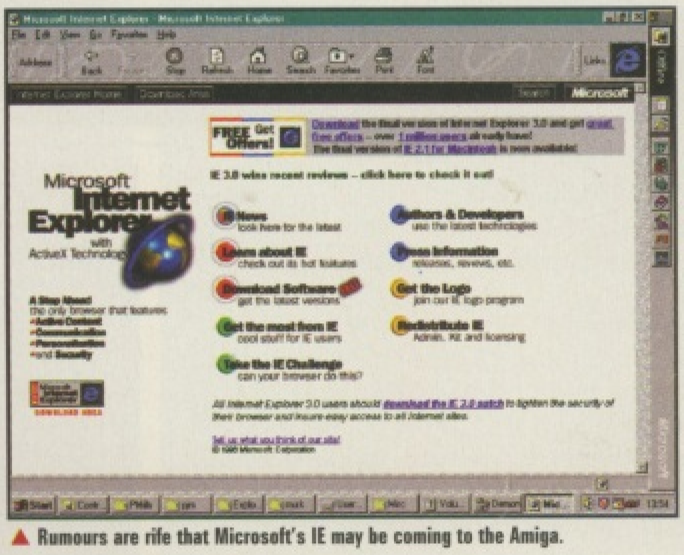
Amiga Net user Gerry Hawker petitioned InternetFCI to increase the Web space allocated to its clients. Naturally most of the users of FCI added their Email address to the list and InternetFCI's Eden Akhavi responded by upping the allocated web space.

Call InternetFCI on 01273 763000 for more information. Existing FCI users should make sure they are on the AmigaFCI mailing list. Send 'subscribe amigafci' to listserv@cu-amiga.co.uk.

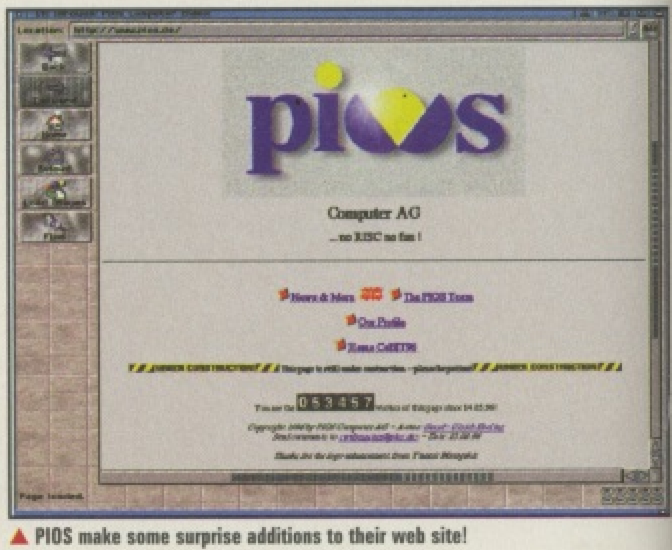
OctaMED SS takes a bashing

OctaMed's author was heavily criticised recently in comp.sys.amiga.audio for placing his product in the commercial domain. Several posters thought it should be given away free. The copy protection used on the CD version of OctaMED sound studio seemed to be the main bone of contention. Comparisons with FastTracker II on the PC were also made and questions raised as to why OctaMED SS doesn't support FT's file standard.

CU Amiga Magazine's Tony Horgan, RBF Software and the author Teijo Kinnunen have all contributed to make it fascinating reading. Drop in to comp.sys.amiga.audio or check out the OctaMED SS web page on http://www.octamed.co.uk ■



▲ Rumours are rife that Microsoft's IE may be coming to the Amiga.



▲ PIOS make some surprise additions to their web site!

Back Issues

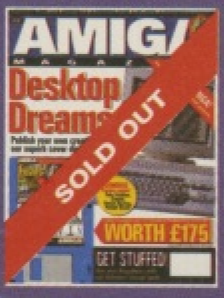
You saw it in the newsagent, but didn't have the cash: when you went back it was gone. That's why back issues is here

September 1995



ON THE DISKS: OctaMED 5.04, Speris Legacy, Time Keepers.
FEATURE: Sex and computers: an indepth look at what there is and what people think about it.
INSIDE: Alien Breed 3D, Gloom, SSFII, Brutal, ViroCop A500, Base Jumpers CD32.

October 1995



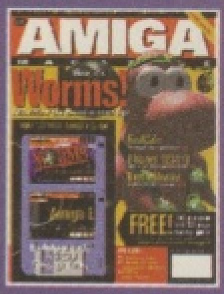
ON THE DISKS: Pagestream 2.2, Fears and Citadel demo.
FEATURES: Using your PageStream cover disk for DTP, Storage: HDs floppies and CD-ROMs.
INSIDE: Odyssey, Real 3D v3, PageStream 3.0i and a multimedia station reviewed.

November 1995



ON THE DISKS: AudioMaster IV full program, Virtual Karting demo, CD-ROM edition-Aminet 7 and more.
FEATURES: CD-ROM definitive guide to drives and disks.
INSIDE: Cinema 4D, Mac™ Emulation, Final Writer 4, Pinball Mania.

December 1995



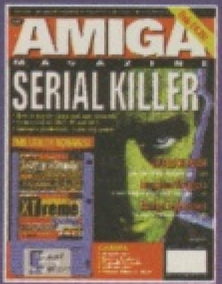
ON THE DISKS: Worms demo, Amiga E full program plus free Amiga E manual
FEATURES: Programming, Amiga music.
INSIDE: Leading Lap, Worms, Flight of the Amazon Queen, Coala, FinalCalc and Amiga M1438S Monitor.

January 1996



ON THE DISKS: Imagine 3.0 full program, Zeewolf 2 & Algomusic
FEATURES: 3D rendering using our cover disk.
INSIDE: MiconiK Tower, World Construction Set, Amilink, Zeewolf 2, SWOS 95/96, Super Tennis Champions and much more.

February 1996



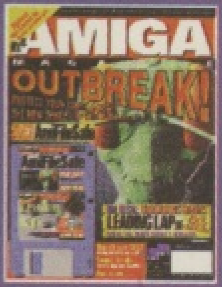
ON THE DISKS: TextureStudio plus Imagine objects, DVerb, Mandel 92, Bluff Titler, Amiga E source code, Xtreme Racing.
FEATURES: Serial linking, portable Amiga prototypes and the first Net Wedding.
INSIDE: DiskMagic, HiSoft CD-ROM, Virtual i glasses.

March 1996



ON THE DISKS: VideoStage Pro, Imgauge & XFD, Gloom Deluxe and 10 Worms levels.
FEATURES: VideoStage and The future of Games.
INSIDE: 060 for A1200, Wordworth 5, Blitz Basic, Super Street Fighter II Turbo, Super Skidmarks data disk.

April 1996



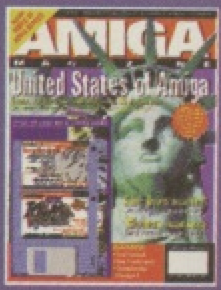
ON THE DISKS: AmiFileSafe, Leading Lap SE – 5 level full game. CD-ROM edition available.
FEATURES: Virus Protection and Wallace & Gromit in the right computer.
INSIDE: SX 32, HiQ Station, The Chaos engine previewed, Zeewolf 2 tips, and more...

May 1996



ON THE DISKS: Soundtracker Pro II, MIDI Sequencer demo, Alien Breed 3D2 demo.
FEATURES: Free Amiga music book, the new Walker, Amiga Surfer pack, and the quest for Amigas.
INSIDE: LightWave 4, Slamtilt Pinball, Tracksuit Manager 2 reviewed.

June 1996



ON THE DISKS: Termite demo, Killing Grounds demo. Plus free 96 page net and comms guide.
FEATURES: Escom sells Amiga Technologies, publish your music.
INSIDE: Modem round-up, Total Football and new TimeKeepers disk reviewed.

July 1996



ON THE DISKS: XiPaint (full program) and Primal Rage demo.
FEATURES: Special report on what's happening in Europe and the latest on Visorp and PIOS.
INSIDE: Image FX 2.6, Surf Squirrel, A4000 Tower, Primal Rage, SWOS Euro and more reviewed.

August 1996



ON THE DISKS: EasyCalc (full program) and Valhalla III demo.
FEATURES: The future of the Amiga with VIScorp, the new PIOS machine and the second part of the Euroscene feature.
INSIDE: Siamese Twin, Photogenics 2.0, Valhalla III and Tin Toy reviewed.

September 1996



ON THE DISKS: Vista Lite (full program) and a demo of Brian Lara Cricket '96. CD-ROM edition too.
FEATURES: The Aminet exposed. All 6 gigabytes!
INSIDE: Final Writer 5, OctaMED SoundStudio, Atapi CD-ROM drive. Plus an exclusive preview of the new AGA Worms.

October 1996



ON THE DISKS: Upper Disk Tools: ideal for sorting out those awkward disks and drives!
FEATURES: The Amiga in America, modern internet
INSIDE: The speed issue, or something. Three top accelerators, a TCP/IP stack comparison and Capital Punishment.

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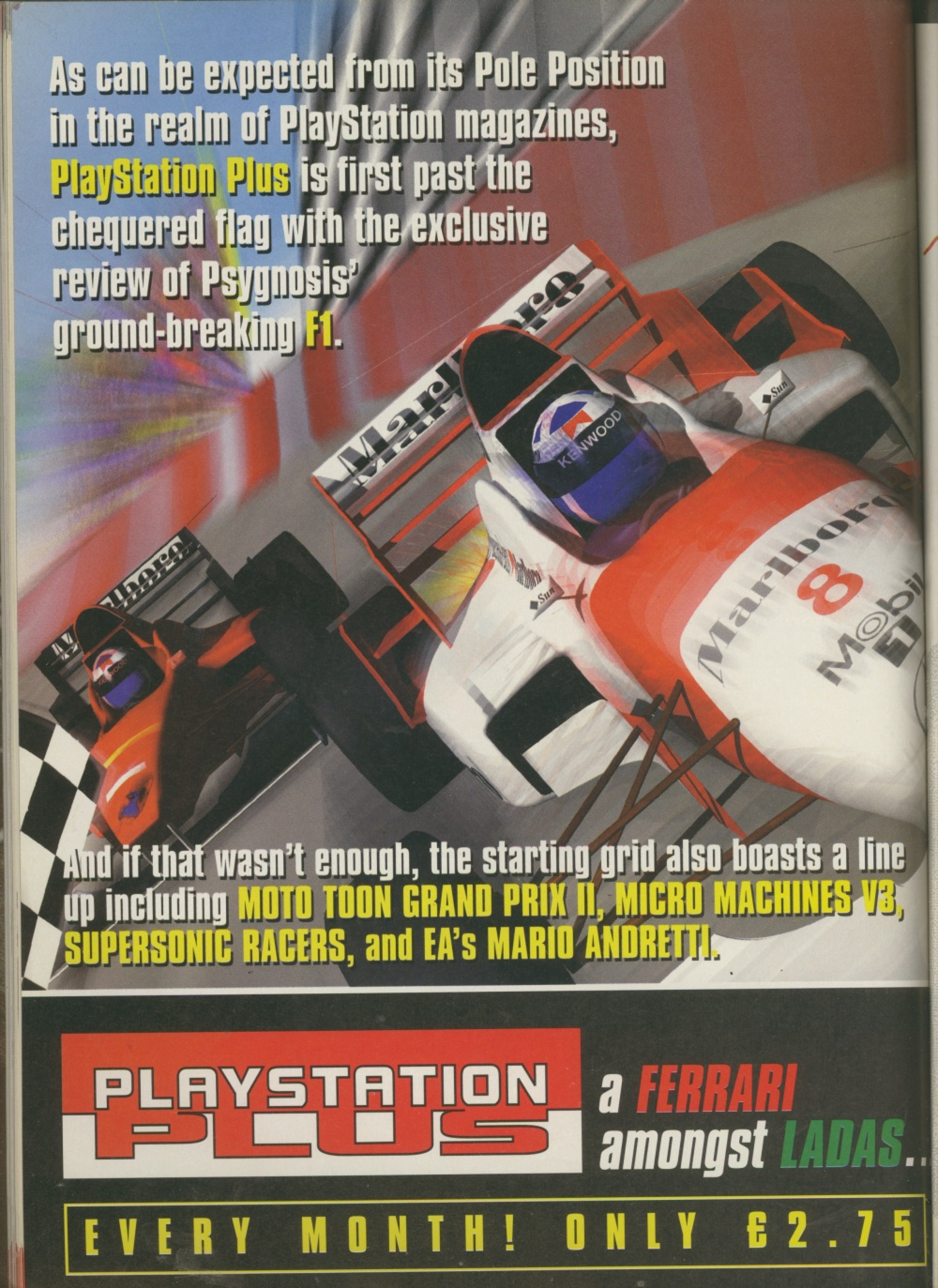
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Sound Lab

Common pitfalls

In a refreshing twist to events, we're concentrating on what not to do instead of what you should do if you want to create great music.

If you want to make interesting, fresh music a good adage to bear in mind is 'never say never'. You might have noticed over the years that this Soundlab series tends to concentrate on the do's rather than don'ts, because if you fill your head with a massive list of things you shouldn't be doing when you write some music, the chances are you'll end up with something about as challenging and exciting as daytime TV. However, breaking away from that solely positive angle for once, this month's Soundlab raises some of the things you might like to avoid in order to improve the quality of your tunes.

Thanks to you, the readers, we get to hear hundreds of modules that pop through our letter box for Tune of the Month type competitions, not to mention the thousands that weave their way to us through the PD channels. Quite often the same 'mistakes' will be heard from one mod to another and it's these kinks that this piece will attempt to iron out.

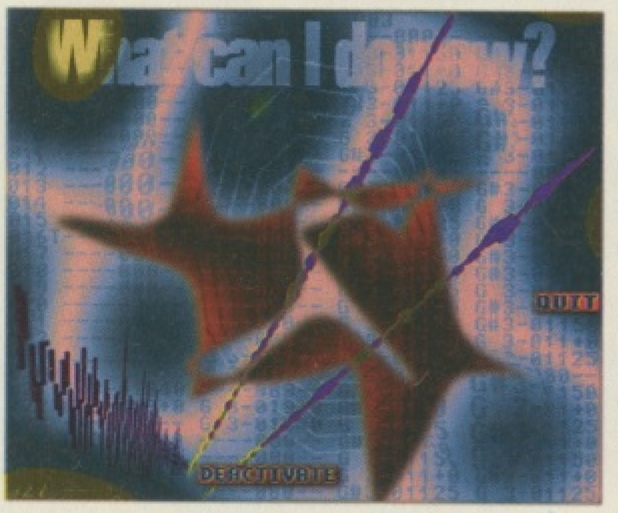
Bean spilling

One of the most common downfalls of mods is that they reveal their entire collection of samples within the first minute or so. This isn't necessarily a problem if there's enough variety and progression in the music itself to keep up the interest level through the rest of the tune, but often this is not the case. People's ears get used to sounds very quickly and with repetitive sounds, the brain has a habit of blocking them out of perception before long. For example, here at the CU Amiga Magazine offices the din of London traffic is constantly blasting in through the open windows, but it's only people at the other end of the phone that seem to notice it, while we seem to become 'blind' to the noise (or maybe we're just deaf).

If you're not careful, you might turn your listener's ears into involuntary shutdown. Keeping a few samples up your sleeve for later, along with some unexpected twists and turns in the arrangement will give you a better chance of keeping your audience attentive from start to finish. One trick is to give the impression you've spilled the beans early on, but then follow this up with repeated bean spilling whenever attention may be about to wane.

Structure

There are no rules about the structure of a piece of music and sometimes it works if you just go with the flow. However, often it's clear that there's been no thought given to the structure of a mod, generally because it peters out halfway through and then just repeats the first sections with a few half-baked ideas thrown in for good measure. It's an easy trap to fall into especially, if like me, your attention span seems to shorten drastically once you've spent an hour or so on a track. One way to improve your chances of coming up with a good balanced track is to think about the overall structure of the song before you start out. Will you follow a straight pop format of verse, chorus and middle eight, or the club-friendly build, drop out, riff, build and repeat ... maybe you've got your own format or sequence of sections in mind. Either way, this can help avert the feeling of having to 'fill' three and half minutes for a pop song, or 10 minutes for an ambient piece or whatever. You



can use each transition period as a time to take a break from composing, have a cuppa and return with renewed enthusiasm and ideas, a bit like stopping off for a bite to eat at the motorway services during a long car journey (well sort of).

Bad tools

A bad workmen blames his tools apparently, but it's up to you to make sure your tools are up to the job, or your samples in this case. It's frustrating to hear a mod that's full of good ideas but is spoilt by low quality samples. If you have a particular sample that's a pivotal point of your track, but you've got it from some second rate pre-sampled collection there's only so much you'll be able to do to improve its quality. If you've done all you can and it still sounds grainy, muffled or distorted, why not try getting hold of the original source sound and sample it yourself. If it's a riff from an existing record, you'll need to find out where it's from sooner or later if you want the track to be released, so why not do a bit of detective work at your local record shop.

I was once working on a track based around a tiny piece of piano pinched from the old house record Strings of Life, but took the sample from a vinyl compilation with about ten tracks squeezed onto each side, so the sound quality was awful. The track was then released on a CD compilation, which I snapped up. Unfortunately the quality was just as bad on that (something to do with the original having been pressed on recycled vinyl I think) so I shelved that track. However, often these remastered CD compilations have come straight from the original master tapes, so the quality is spot on. Don't forget though, that you'll need copyright clearance if you want to release a track that samples an existing record.

I'm full up

With the arrival of multi-channel trackers like OctaMED SoundStudio it can be tempting to keep layering more tracks on top of one another to fill out the sound. While it's true that most studios have access to many more tracks on their big 'Bridge of the Enterprise' style mixers, it doesn't follow that you need loads of tracks to come up with a good production.

Over filling a piece with too many sounds at once becomes a problem when the instruments start fighting for your attention, often because they are using the same frequency ranges. It's loads of fun to have access to all these tracks, especially after being constrained to just four for so long, but take time out to make sure each sound and part of the song is there for a reason, doing a job that's not already taken care of by another part.

As a test, when your tracks start to fill up, try playing through a looped section and removing certain instruments. If you don't notice their departure then you can really do without them. If you're particularly fond of such a part, you can always copy it to a spare pattern and use it somewhere else in the song where the arrangement is not so busy. ■

Tony Horgan

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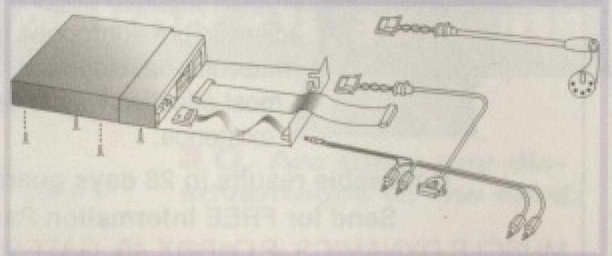
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FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Still using a TV with your Amiga? Here's all you need to know about exchanging it for a monitor instead.

Q. Why a monitor?

A. Monitors produce much better pictures than TVs, although top quality TV sets with Scart inputs are comparable to cheap monitors. However, certain types of monitor will operate at faster refresh rates than TVs and that means larger displays with no interlace flicker.

Q. Can I use a PC monitor with an Amiga?

A. Most PC monitors are SVGA and operate at a refresh rate of about 31kHz. The standard Amiga output is 15kHz. This means an Amiga operating in this mode will not be able to display a picture. However, Amigas with the AGA chipset can open special DoubleScan and Multiscan screen modes which are very close to 31kHz. Sadly, in most cases they aren't close enough so If you are offered a PC monitor, try it before you buy it. Remember that only with a graphics card can the Amiga drive a PC monitor reliably.

Q. Which can I use?

A. There are a few monitors around which are designed for the Amiga, such as those produced by MicroVitec. Not only will these monitors display standard 15kHz screen modes but DoubleScan and MultiScan modes too. This means you can display a 640 by 512 Workbench with no interlace flicker.

Q. What is interlace flicker? Can I stop it?

A. An Amiga operating in a normal PAL video mode can display a screen of 640 pixels by 256 lines. However, a display of 640 by 512 is too much to be produced in one frame of video. Instead the Amiga takes two attempts, displaying half the image in alternate frames. The result is a larger display but with an annoying flicker. Interlace is acceptable in some video applications but it's no good for serious Workbench work.

To stop the flicker do two things: speed up the Amiga's video output and display the output on a suitable monitor: a TV simply isn't up to the task with its 15kHz refresh rate. You can speed up the Amiga's video output if you have an AGA chipset by using DoubleScan or MultiScan screen modes but as discussed these aren't compatible with most PC monitors and require a dedicated Amiga monitor. Instead a piece of hardware called a FlickerFixer can be used. This buffers the two half-frames and then resends them at a speed suitable for display on a PC monitor. The only FlickerFixer currently available is ScanDoubler II from Power Computing and it requires a Zorro slot.

Q. How does a graphics card work?

A. A graphics card (ie Picasso or Cybervision) fits into a standard Zorro slot on big box Amigas. It has special driver software which provides extra screen modes: when you alter an application or Workbench to use these new modes, the video output appears out of the back of the new card.

As well as the drivers provided with the card, many cards are supported by a package called 'CyberGraphics' or 'CyberGFX'. This is a set of drivers which is supported by lots of applications and as long as you have the relevant drivers for your card you can make use of any software which support the CyberGFX standard. It's the nearest there is to a standard for 'retargetable graphics'.

Q. What are the advantages of using a graphics card?

A. Graphics cards can open larger displays with more colours and faster refresh rates than the standard Amiga graphics chipset. As a result you can use a 256 colour Workbench screen in 800 by 600 pixels or better, without any flicker or shimmer. The Workbench display will work quickly, without using up a lot of Chip RAM.

Unlike the normal Amiga graphics modes which are based on 'bitplanes', graphics cards work in 'chunky' screen modes, which are very suited to moving around large blocks of data such as windows. Page processor/DTP programs and rendering packages such as Imagine or Cinema4D will also benefit. It's also possible to replay animations much quicker: a package such as Main Actor Professional can play back Anim files extremely fast. Apple Mac and PC emulators will also work faster with a graphics card.

Although HAM8 mode can display many colours, graphics cards can display true 24-bit images. TV Paint and Photogenics can use the new graphics modes to display thousands or millions of colours very quickly so your graphics will have never looked so sharp, bright or colourful.

Q. Are there any disadvantages to the card?

A. Yes. For a start you need a suitable Amiga as all graphics cards require Zorro slots. Then you'll need a decent monitor: it would be a waste of time attempting to use a graphics card with a TV or 15kHz monitor. You need a PC style SVGA monitor and the bigger the better. If you want resolutions larger than 800 by 600 you'll need a 17" monitor and that's another £500.

When you do get your graphics card system connected to the new monitor, you'll find that not all programs will work. Most applications will work but hardly any games will run. This is because, for speed reasons, games don't request screen modes or perform graphics tasks via the operating system: and that means they can't be re-directed to the graphics card. So, you'll need to resort to your old monitor or TV for them. The Amiga's standard bitplane graphics are much more video-friendly than the output from graphics cards. Smooth scrolling, genlocking and high-quality video titling is still best left to the standard Amiga output.

Q. Do all graphics cards require Zorro slots? I have an A1200, am I stuck?

A. One solution is to buy a Tower Case adaptor which includes Zorro slots but that is an expensive route. A new module called Grafitti might appeal to the Zorro-less or budget minded. It connects to the standard monitor output and has special chunky graphics modes which can speed up certain applications a lot. More details when we get them.

John Kennedy

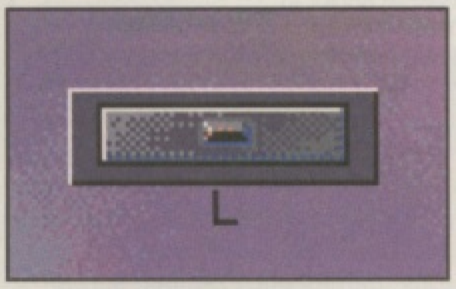
Masterclass

PART 3

Our investigation into Workbench's hidden nooks and crannies continues.

Last month we got on the case of the missing Workbench files and unearthed a few that had been lurking around in the recesses of your Amiga. This month we continue along that vein with some more files that you can find on your Amiga, if you look hard enough.

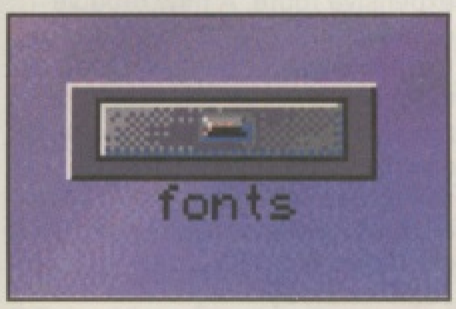
L plates



The L directory is where you will find various system handlers and file systems. This is one of those drawers which can happily keep itself to itself and leave all us alone. If you take a peek you may find exciting files such as the CrossDOSFileSystem or a CD-ROM or networking filing system if you have installed one. Yes, it's also where the Shell handler lives, but it's all a bit much at times.

For more information on the delights of handlers and other Amiga devices, hunt out a book called 'The Amiga Guru Book' by Ralph Babel. This is the respected reference work for those who really enjoy C.

Fonts are us

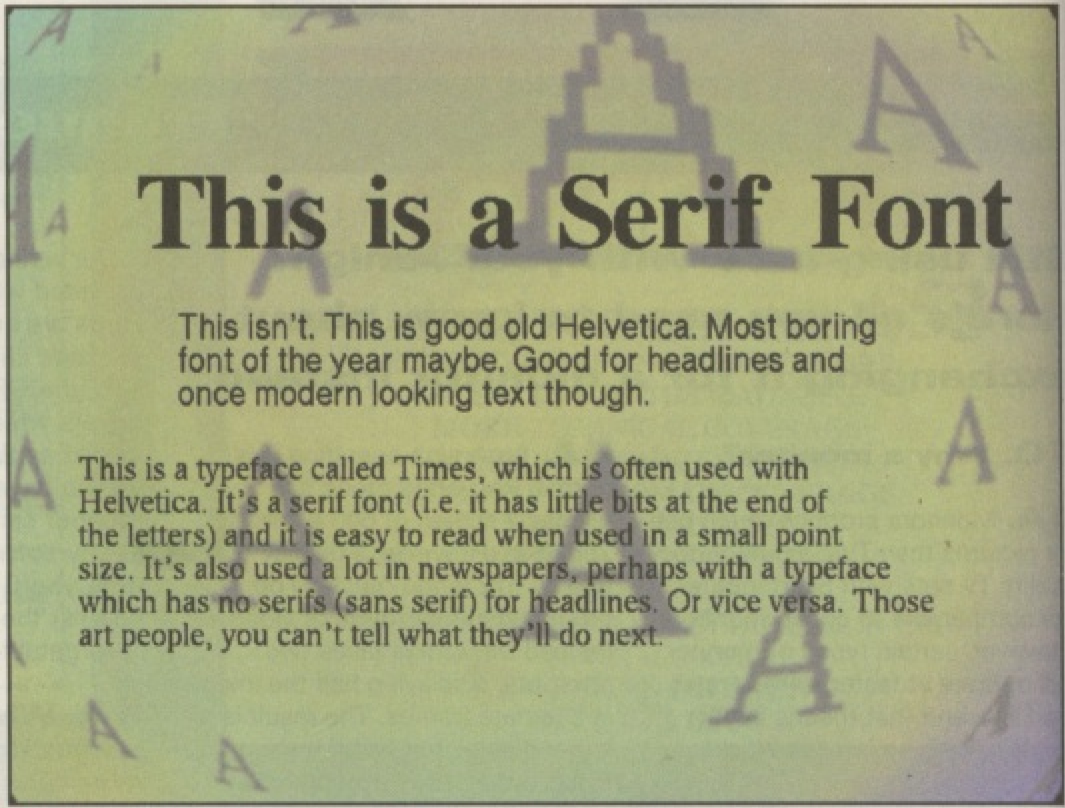


Fonts are fun: remember that. When your DTP program is refusing to print anything even slightly resembling what is on screen, repeat it to yourself like a mantra: 'fonts are fun, fonts are fun'.

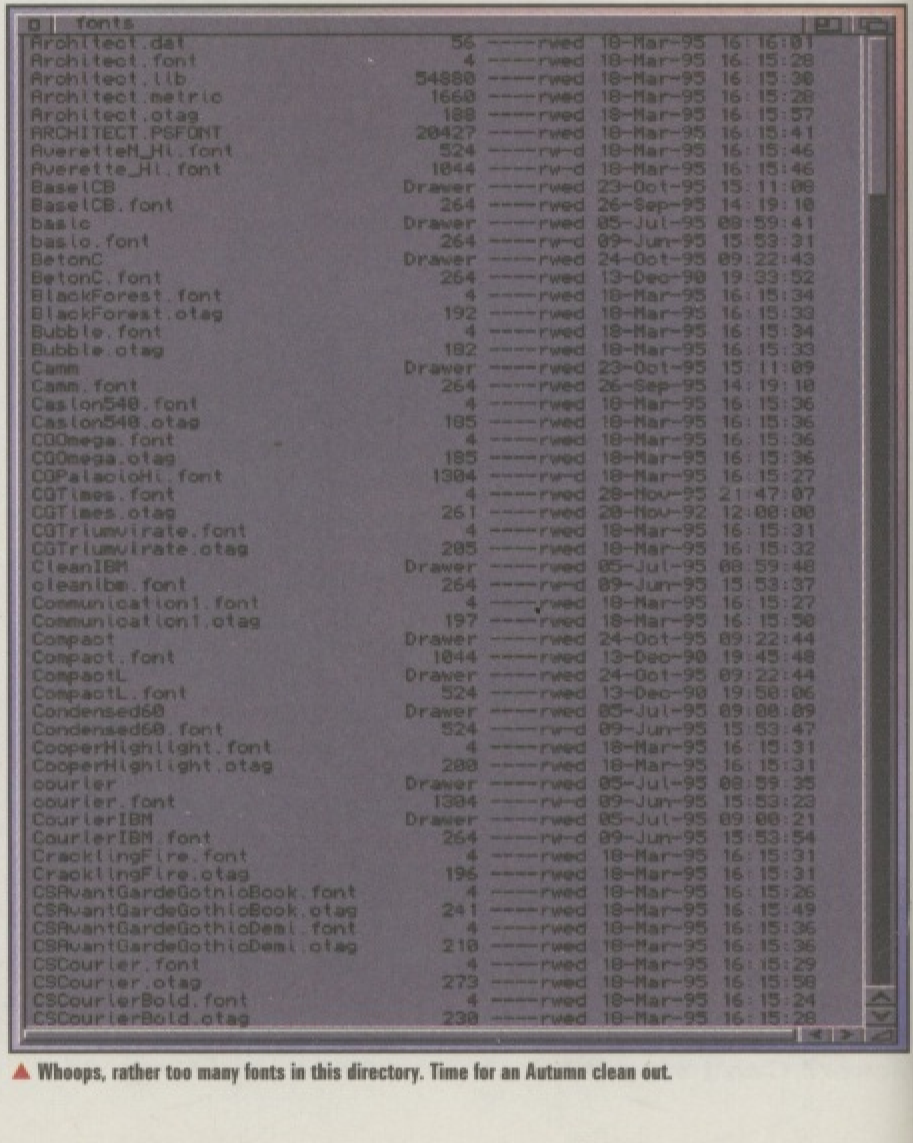
Whenever you see text appear on screen, you are looking at a font. The appearance and the size of the letters is determined by the typeface used and the point size of the text. You can control the fonts used by the Workbench from the Fonts Preference editor. As you use various packages and install new programs, the number of fonts you collect will grow to frightening proportions. It's worth having a clear-out every so often. If you don't, you'll find you have to wait ages every time you want to pick a font in an art package.

There are two types of fonts: bitmapped (sometimes called non-proportional) and scalable. The default Amiga font is called 'Topaz'. The name doesn't mean anything special, it's just the title the Amiga designers gave to it. Topaz is a bitmapped font, which means it was designed to look good at a certain size. For example if you scale it up too far it will look blocky. Bitmap fonts are useful because they are memory efficient and fast. A good text editor such as Cygnus Ed can scroll text incredibly fast because it deals exclusively with bitmapped fonts.

The disadvantage of bitmapped fonts becomes obvious when you use them in a DTP program and send them to a printer. Yuck is the word! To get around this, the Amiga uses



▲ Fonts come in all different shapes and sizes. Different typefaces and sizes are chosen depending on circumstances and the whim of the designer.



▲ Whoops, rather too many fonts in this directory. Time for an Autumn clean out.



▲ Bitmapped and scalable fonts. Can you tell the difference? I hope so. If you can't, you'd better visit an optician immediately.

Intellifonts. These are fonts which are different from bitmapped fonts in a fundamental way. Rather than storing a miniature image of each letter, a description of the text is stored. When drawing a letter A for example, the Intellifont describes the two lines meeting at an angle and the cross bar. The result is that no matter what size the letter is displayed at, it's always smooth. As you can imagine this process takes up more memory and processing speed. For DTP applications though, it's worth it.

So why does your printer produce smooth text when you print a text file from a text editor or the Shell using bitmapped fonts? Because unlike with a DTP package, the text itself is being sent to the printer. The printer can then use its internal (smooth) fonts to print it.

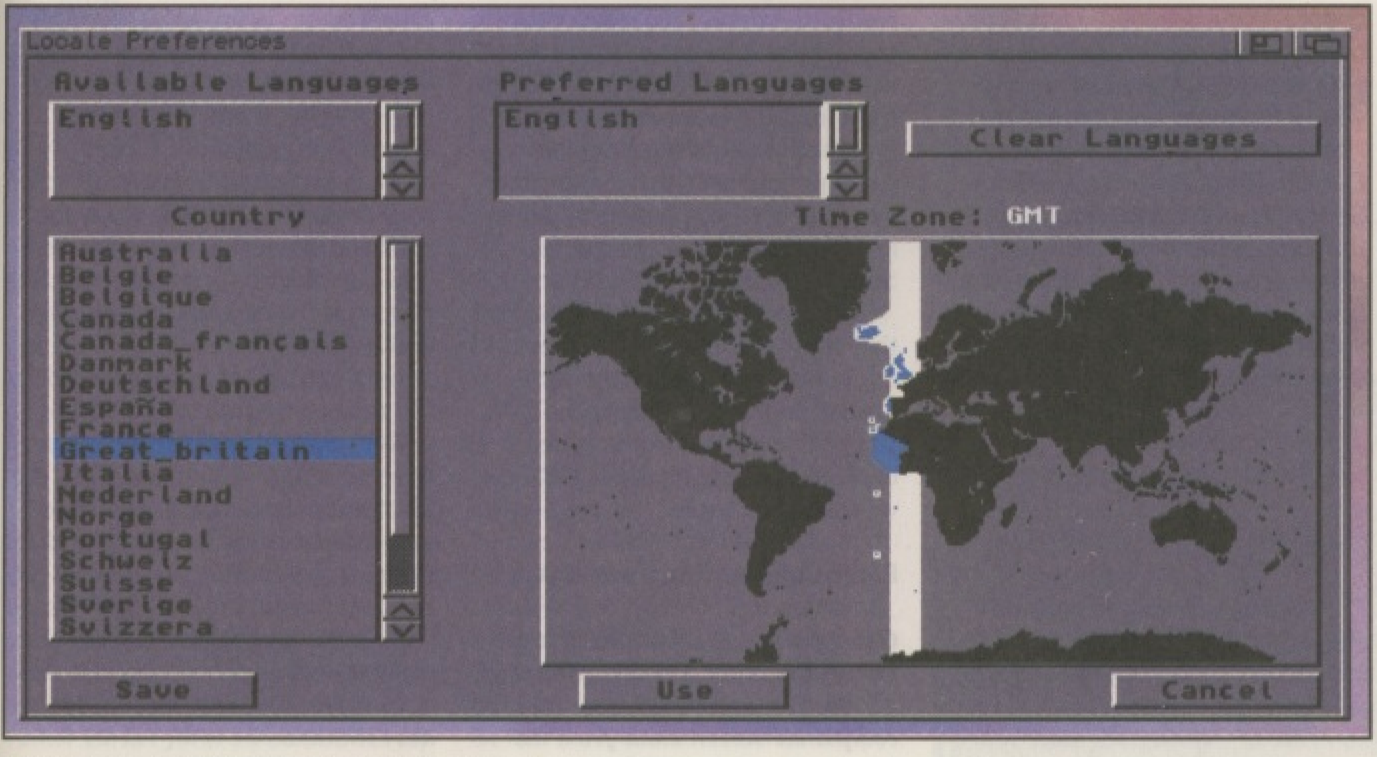
A DTP program will not send the plain text. Instead it creates an internal image of what the printed document looks like. It then sends this image line-by-line to the printer as though it were a huge graphic image. Result: the ability to include graphics and smooth fonts no matter what size they are displayed in.

The fonts drawer on Workbench (ah, I knew we would get around to it) stores both these types of fonts. You'll see Topaz in there: in fact, you'll see a file called Topaz.font and then a sub-directory called Topaz which contains a file for each size available.

Are you Locale?

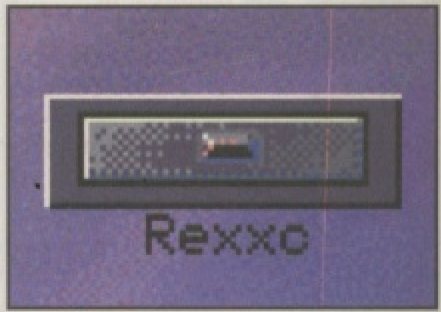


The Amiga is an international computer and this directory was part of an attempt to make it easier for programmers to provide support in multiple languages (well, English, German, French, Italian, Danish, Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish, Norwegian and Dutch). There is a Preferences editor entitled 'Locale' and by setting this your application would hopefully develop the ability to speak to you in your chosen tongue. Nice idea, but few programs actually support it. It's still worth exploring mind you. If you look in locale:help/English/sys you'll find a file called amigaguide.guide. This is the file which AmigaGuide uses when asked for help. Altering it can be both useful and amusing too.



▲ The Locale editor can change where you live. Virtually.

Here Rexx boy



Aha, now we're talking. This is where the Amiga's built-in programming language lives. Here you'll find the various ARexx commands such as 'RX'. We've dealt with ARexx is past Masterclass tutorials in a great deal of depth and this is where the magic spells are kept. ■

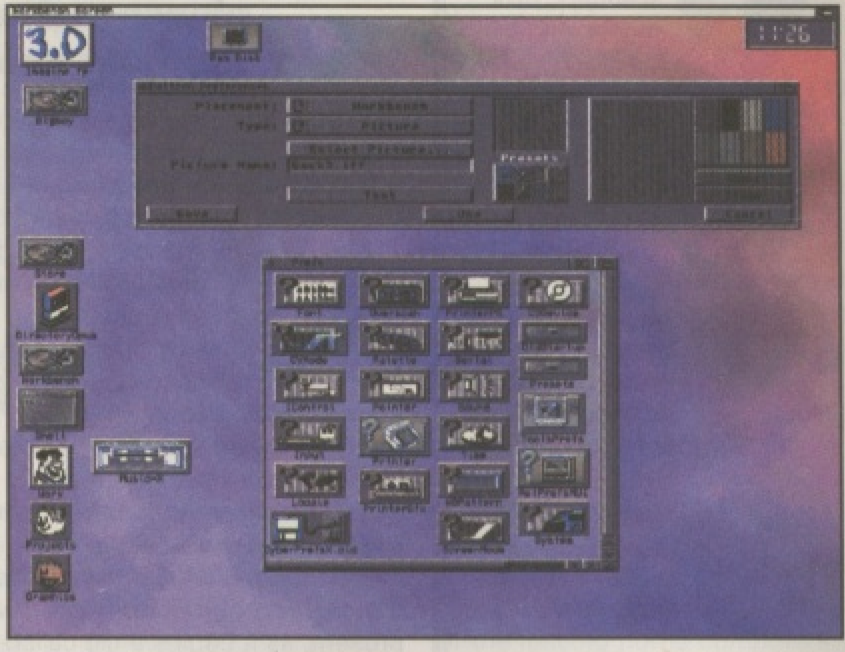
John Kennedy

Pretty backdrops and icons

Maybe you are wondering why my Workbench looks a lot less drab than yours. Is it all down to my sparkling personality? Well, partly, but a lot is also due to a Preferences program called WBPattern. Use it and you can select a standard IFF image to appear in the background of the Window or the Workbench screen.

The only snag is that you are limited to the number of colours of your Workbench display. Unless you have a graphics card, anything more than sixteen can be pretty slow and memory greedy.

Creating your own backdrop patterns can be an interesting evening's entertainment. I like random patterns of pastel shades, because it's still possible to read black text over them. Others prefer stone or marble textures or even digitised images.



Logos, meanings and mysteries:

- CD32 queries, ParNET and various other CD ROM-related problems.
- All about upgrading RAM, operating systems and processors.
- Plug-in hardware of any kind: scanners, disk drives etc.
- Answers to queries on particular pieces of software.
- Music, sampling, MIDI and anything that makes a loud noise.
- Miscellaneous tools to keep your Amiga running smoothly.
- Form-feeds, page-breaks, preferences and lots, lots more!
- Monitors, TVs, modulators, screen-modes and all that stuff.
- Pixels, sprites, animation, pictures. In one small word: graphics.
- Spreadsheets, databases, organisers, accounts ...
- Everything you need answering about the internet
- Not everything fits into a pigeonhole, but anything you like fits in here.

Q&A

The dashing duo take a break from getting the best technical products in for review to answer your questions. Send your technical queries to Q&A, CU Amiga Magazine, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.



We can only answer limited amounts of telephone queries, so please write in to get the help you need.



A written letter receives full attention and we try our best to come up with a solution. It's good to talk but it's better to write.

Overdrivers

I recently purchased a second hand A1200 with an Archos Overdrive dual-speed CD-ROM drive plugged into the PCMCIA slot. An Archos 'Over-CD' installation disk came with it but the installation does not work properly. One executable on the disk called 'update-handler' recognises that I have an EIDE CD-ROM drive present, as it copies a file called 'EIDE' to the RAM-disk. The presence of this file then causes the execution of the correct part of the installer script. The problem is that the only file that gets installed is 'L:overcd-handler'. The installer script then tries to install some libraries into LIBS: from a disk called 'OVERCD', which I do not have.

The person from who I purchased the machine insists that only one installation disk came with the drive. Do you know where I can get another set of installation disks from? In reply to Duncan Strand's letter in the September issue you stated that the Zappo and Archos CD-ROM drives are pretty much the same. If so, would Zappo CD installation software work with my CD-ROM drive? Would it be possible to replace the drive in the Archos unit with a newer faster one (say four-speed or six-speed)?

Peter Barrack, Pembrokeshire.

Right, first of all let's check that those missing libraries aren't on the installation disk (which you refer to as 'Over-CD' and the script calls 'OVERCD'). If they are there you can copy them to LIBS: by hand. If not, it sounds like you need another installation disk (how come the original owner never installed the drive?). Zappo installation disks would probably work if you could get hold of some. Replacing the drive with another IDE mechanism should present no problem.

We'll keep your address on record in case any nice reader feels the urge to send us in any replacement installation software for you.

PC monitor

I recently acquired a Philips 9CM053/ OOb PC colour monitor. There was no manual with it so I phoned Power Computing to ask if their VGA adaptor would work with this monitor. They said the 9 pin connection on the monitor would not fit their adaptor and recommended phoning RSD Connections in Hertford, which I did. RSD said there should be no problem connecting my A1200 to the Philips monitor. They supplied me with an adaptor cable but I could not get a picture on the monitor from Workbench. I got a pale multiple image when I tried the game Soccer Kid on it.

I wrote to RSD but they replied that they only supplied cables and could not help with technical advice. Is there anything I can do to get this working or is it just a case of incompatibility and £15 wasted on a cable?

Peter Collins, Tipperary Town.

Good news: you should be able to get your monitor working with your A1200. You need to select a VGA compatible screen mode from the Workbench preferences. This monitor will not display video screen modes, the default screen type selected by your A1200. Soccer Kid (and most other games) will not work on this monitor because they too use a video screen mode. There's no way you can change the screen mode used by most arcade-style games, so you'll have to use a TV or a video-capable monitor to view those.

SoundStudio

I have a few points concerning OctaMED SoundStudio.

1. When I try to use the echo effect in a fairly big module I get 'not enough memory' even though I have a 4Mb RAM card.

2. To get SoundStudio to work without the owner check failing, I have to put the entire disks' contents into the RAM disk. Why is this?

3. My setup is an A1200 with 6Mb of RAM and a Gillet Micro Mixer. When I try to use the pan effect '2E' you can't notice the effect. But I still want to put my modules through the Micro Mixer.

4. Most of my breakbeats are split and saved as segments (ie. 'bass shot.amen', 'snare-riff1.amen' etc). I know very little about ARexx scripts but I want to write a script that would load all the relative segments of a sample when I clicked on just the first.

5. Where and how do you get the Startup.omed script to work? I would like SoundStudio to load a metronome module with a 4/4 beat as a default. I can get it to work from a keypress but I'd much rather just have it work automatically every time I start a new module.

6. I'm on a tight budget. Can you

recommend a 50MHz accelerator for about £200?

Mike Fishwick, Isle of Wight.

1. First check you have '1-64 channel mixing' selected from the Song Options window. If so, try altering the size of the Mix Buffer from the Mix Settings window.
2. We're not sure on this one. Ours works fine when installed to hard drive from floppies, although the CD version requires the disc to be in the CD drive even if loading from the hard drive.
3. This panning effect works fine for us. As with question 1, check that '1-64 channel mixing' is enabled. Also make sure you are using the correct values (F0-FE for left and 00-10 for right panning).
4. This is tricky. We're starting up a whole new ARexx series very soon, so keep 'em peeled – that should sort you out.
5. Likewise, an ARexx tutorial is really in order here.
6. The cheapest 030 accelerator for your A1200 is the Magnum 030 card, which is available with a very capable 40mHz 68030, optional FPU and no RAM for £139.99 from Wizard Developments (tel: 01322 527 800).
The Blizzard cards available from Gordon Harwoods have just been reduced in price and are now better buys than ever. The 1230 Mk 4 (with a 50mHz 030 and MMU) is now £159.99. Call Harwoods on 01773 836 781 for details.
If your existing RAM card has a SIMM on it, check before hand with your dealer because you should be able to carry it over to your new accelerator.

CD music

Can I sample snatches of audio CDs for use within OctaMED 5.04? My CD-ROM details are as follows: **Make: Matshita**
Model: CR-581 Quad Speed
Unit: 1 Device: Tandemat_PCMCIA.device

Is this possible with my current set up or is separate software or a dedicated sample needed?

Graeme Milne, Northumberland.

Certain types of CD-ROM drives can pass the sample data from audio CD tracks across to your Amiga. There are a few tools available from the public domain which will allow you to do this, such as AudioLab 16 for example (which was included in a rather earlier form on our CUCD II). Your particular drive is not listed as being compatible with it, but that doesn't mean that it's not. Try hunting down that and any other similar software (search PD CDs for "cdda" which is short for CD digital audio).

PCMCIA RAM

I've had my Amiga 1200 for almost a year now and since I purchased it I have been trying all over Hull and the local area to find anywhere that sells memory cards for the PCMCIA port, but as yet I have had no luck. Any ideas where I might get one?

Paul Collins, North Humberside.

A PCMCIA RAM card will be slower and probably more expensive than an equivalent RAM card for your trapdoor expansion slot, so you may as well ditch that idea. A trapdoor RAM card will free up your PCMCIA slot for other peripherals, such as a CD-ROM drive, a video digitiser, hard drive and so on. If you're determined to get a PCMCIA RAM card you might try looking ay some PC dealer's adverts. These should work fine in your Amiga, even if they are a bit slow.

Cheapo CD32

I have required a CD-ROM drive for my A1200 for some time now and recently have been offered a CD32 for £99.99. Please could you help me by answering the following questions:
1. Is it true that a CD32 could be connected to an A1200 via a Parnet cable, or indeed any other cable?
2. Would the above connection enable both the A1200 and the CD32 to share the CD-ROM, the hard drive, and the floppies? Or at least could the A1200 access the CD-ROM in a fast and reliable way?
3. Where can I get a Parnet cable from, and for how much, or could I make one?
4. What is the speed of the CD32's drive?
5. Is there any difference between the A1200 and the CD32 internally?
6. Has the CD32 got stereo sound outputs for connection to an amplifier and will the machine play music CDs?
7. Is £100 a good price to pay for a brand new CD32?
8. Is it possible to attach a floppy drive to the CD32 and load Workbench? Can a keyboard be attached also?

C Purle, Lancashire.

1. Yes you can.
2. Yes, but the data transfer rate is not very fast.
3. You can get all the necessary software and cables from Marpet Developments for £24.95. They call the package CD32 S-PORT. Call them on 01423 712 600 for more details.
4. It's a double speed drive.
5. Yes there are a few differences, but the CD32 is based on the A1200.
6. Yes it has stereo audio outputs and will play audio CDs.
7. You could probably get one cheaper if you shop around.
8. Not without adding an expander system, such as the CD32 ProModule, as reviewed in the July 1996 issue of CU Amiga Magazine.

Talking trash

Is it true? Did the Gurus at CU Amiga Magazine actually advise people to format their hard drive, just to eliminate an annoying trashcan (Masterclass, CU Amiga September 96)? What nonsense. There are two perfectly simple ways of removing a trashcan from a directory. These are as follows:
1. Open a Shell and type 'delete workbench3.0:trashcan#?'. This will delete both the trashcan and its icon.
2. Use the IconEdit program supplied with Workbench to change the trashcan icon into a drawer icon (Type menu, select Drawer), save the changes then delete the trashcan from Workbench by selecting it and using Delete from the Icon menu.

There, now isn't that a lot easier than reformatting your entire hard disk? Not mention a damn site safer. I will consider this a brief lapse of concentration on your behalf and trust it will not happen again.

Scott Strachan, Portsmouth.

Yes, you could do either of those things, but John says that if you follow point one and then at a later date selected Empty Trash (either deliberately or by accident) the system may well get confused and do something rather horrid. When faced with your second suggestion John says that yes, you can go right ahead an do what you like with your Trashcan, getting rather tired of the whole affair, perhaps wishing he never mentioned it in the first place. But he's not wrong!

Oh go on ...

In Kays Catalogue I saw an Amiga 1200 Internet Surfer pack with 2Mb of RAM expandable to 4Mb for £629.99. Is this a good purchase? I am looking for a computer that can handle graphics, wordprocessing etc as well as having good gaming capabilities. Also, as I use a Mac and PC computers on a daily basis I was wondering if there was a piece of software that can translate Amiga files into PC format and vice-versa (ie a program similar to Apple File Exchange on the Mac) as this would greatly benefit me and my studies.

And finally, with all the speculation surrounding the Amiga's future, I was wondering if the Amiga would continue to be one of the leading home computers.

Tony Smith, N Ireland

First of all, yes it's a good buy, although the Internet software in the bundle is now quite dated. Once you're on-line you can get all the latest from the Internet. The Amiga 1200 can actually be expanded to at least 130Mb RAM with cards such as the Blizzard 1230/40/60 range, not just 4Mb. Yes, it's excellent for graphics and productivity software and also has a wide variety of games available. You don't need any extra software. The A1200 comes with Cross-Dos as standard, which will read and write to PC format disks, as well as format them from scratch. Mac disk emulation systems are also available. As for the machine's future, it's holding up amazingly well so far ...

Send your Q&A problems to ...

You can send your technical problems [or answers – Ed] to CU Amiga by the following means:
By letter to Q&A, CU Amiga, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.
Email: Q+A@cu Amiga.co.uk.
NO SAES PLEASE We regret that we can't respond to readers' questions by post or over the phone. Please do not include a stamped addressed envelope with your letters as we simply don't have time to answer the thousands we receive. Responses are only available through the pages of this magazine.

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AMIGA
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Are You Getting It Every Month?



Dear Newsagent:

- ❑ **Please reserve/order a copy of the December CD-ROM edition of CU Amiga Magazine for me**
- ❑ **CU Amiga Magazine now has monthly CD-ROMs, please reserve/order one for me every month until further notice**
- ❑ **Please reserve the standard floppy disk version of CU Amiga Magazine for me until further notice**

My name is---

My Address is ---

Newsagent: CU Amiga Magazine is distributed by Frontline. Please contact your local wholesaler for copies of the CU Amiga Magazine CD edition, monthly at £5.99 from November 1996.

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Praise for our Super CD-ROMs just keeps coming in. And the good news is that we are determined to stick to our pledge to bring you the best Amiga CDs you can buy. Our monthly CDs are packed with top utilities, games, artwork, music modules and exclusive applications and goodies. Don't miss out on the CD or the superb floppy issues, ring subscriptions now on: 01858 435 350 or place a reserve order with your newsagent using the form here.

Points of view

Charts and hearts



By Alan Dykes

I would like to take this opportunity, my last as it turns out, to comment on the situation the Amiga community finds itself in at the moment. On one hand tens of thousands of people are still buying CU Amiga Magazine, still enjoying it and still finding it the invaluable source of information it always has been. On the other hand magazines are closing down and software houses are deserting Amiga because sales aren't as high as they were. And who can blame them? You can't survive on good will alone.

> **"Accusations of recycling are fully justified, but what the hell, if Stock, Aitken and Waterman could do it why can't Sensible?"**

But don't let the begrudgers drag you down. Mail order sales of CD software, of hardware, of games even, is stronger than the charts let on. If people can't get games in shops by golly they'll get them elsewhere, and many of these sales will not be recorded by those who compile charts. You haven't been able to get productivity software in shops for years now but that hasn't stopped people upgrading via mail order to later, more powerful versions.

Sour power

Some weeks ago Stuart Campbell, ex-Amiga Power staffer (a mag sadly no longer with us – and pretty sad too while it was), penned a typically vitriolic put-down of Amiga games sales for the console dominated TV Teletext report Digitizer. Mr Campbell is a respected computer games journalist of considerable experience, and even if his reference to Amiga Power's 'mighty oaken doors' is a little overstated – token would have been more accurate for the last 12 months considering its size and its anti-Amiga attitude – he should certainly be taken seriously. Or should he?

His report centred around sales of three games in July, with figures complied from the Gallup/ELSPA charts top ten. The three games were Gloom (no position stated), Premier Manager 3 (number 5) and Worms (number 2). The first sold 118 units. Hmm. The second sold 332. Dearie me. Worms sold 526 copies. Oh no! More information on total sales follows and, getting out his calculator, Stuart works out that Worms has sold approximately 19,666 copies on Amiga since it was launched. Is that including or excluding the 526 in sold July? Never mind. By the way Team 17 disagree with his sales figures but he's using industry standard information so let's stick with it.

Fact finding

What Mr Campbell fails to point out is that each of these games has been on sale for over six months. Gloom Deluxe is no doubt the version of Gloom he is referring to (it's the only one on sale in my local HMV), which is itself a 10 month old sequel to a game well-nigh 18 months old. Premier Manager 3? Another old sequel. Worms, the only original game, was also released before Christmas 1995. Using Stuart's gloomy benchmark figures would mean that at an average of just over 500 games per month Worms would, even by now, have sold just 5500 copies and not the 19,666 he himself quotes (that's 500 per month for the 11 or so months it has now been on sale for).

But hold on, is it possible the reason these games aren't selling well is that they're just too damn old now. No doubt the vast majority of Worms' total sales were achieved within the first month or two, like any piece of software. You see these three old timers are still in the top ten because nothing has ever been released that's worthy of replacing them there. You can't have sales without products to sell!

Another odd omission was the number 1 game that month. No prizes for guessing what it was. I'm not suggesting that SWOS is selling tens of thousands every month, but it's ahead of Worms and due to Warner's policy of bringing out a new version almost every time the Amiga community breaths the game remains at the top. Accusations of recycling are fully justified, but what the hell, if Stock Aitken and Waterman could do it why can't Sensible ? The real point is that you can't sell the same old stuff forever, it has a shelf life and if it isn't replaced it won't be sold. A computer format cannot hope to survive long if its manufacturers keep going out of business either.

Software producers will always pick the newest and most exciting platform to develop for. If and when VIScorp finally conclude their buyout, produce or licence for production the next generation Amiga and manage to avoid the receiver, things will change. But in the meantime there are still lots of people out there looking for the latest NEW software to run on their A1200s, and where there is demand legitimate supply usually follows (in the free world anyway).

If you want the Amiga to stay around then remember you have the power to keep it going. You could do worse than trying to program your own games and applications: anything is possible. As Jean-Luc Picard would say: 'Make It So'. ■



▲ Sensi Soccer (above) was omitted from Stu's charts while Worms (below) was said to have sold 526 copies .



■ Alan Dykes is CU Amiga Magazine's editor. But not for long (sob).

Backchat

Last month, it was Spain, this time it's the Italians who are having their say concerning our Euroscene feature. And one brave young boy takes on the software publishers. Isn't it time you wrote in?

Letter of the Month
An inspiration to us all

I originally got an Amiga 500 about six or seven years ago to play games on. Every boy in my year had one, it was the in thing to have and we had them because we enjoyed playing games. Since then I have upgraded to an A1200, a Blizzard 1230/IV and a CD-ROM drive for the purpose of playing better games. The A1200 was bought to play AGA games, the CD-ROM drive to play CD32 games and the Blizzard to play new Doom clones such as TKG. However, I have become increasingly frustrated by the lack of new games coming out that really push my system to the limit. I wrote to a number of games companies asking them why games such as Putty Squad, TFX and Myst were never released. I am asking that other Amiga users do this and join together to write similar letters to publishers so we can finally see games such as TFX and Putty Squad which I am sure would be a huge success on the Amiga. I believe that if all the active Amiga games users group together and pressurise the publishers we could get more games in the shops that people actually want to buy. The Amiga users have grown up, we are no longer a group of school kids with A500s but a group of students with Amigas which are easily a match for some of today's PCs. I feel that the software industry needs to be told what the other underlying trends in the Amiga games market are. So please write to them and let them know that you are out there. Remember it is always games that sell home computer systems not hardware specs or business software. Therefore the future of the Amiga still lies with quality games.

Richard Hunter, Nottingham.

That's what we like to hear: stories about people who are actively doing something to keep the Amiga alive and make people ware that there is still a huge amount of people out there ready and willing to part with lots of cash.

A few ideas

About eight months ago I sold my Amiga 1200 and I finally started to use a PC I bought about a year and a half ago, after selling my A4000. However, I just could not get on with the PC so I purchased a secondhand A1200 until Windows '95 turned up. Even so, I still buy your magazine because the PC world is so dead (it's all business or games, no productivity) and there is just no magazine like yours for the PC. I think it's because the Amiga had this great family behind it who are dedicated users squeezing the last bit out of the machine, whereas PC coders just expect you to upgrade your processor or RAM. And now you have put a CD on the cover, I can also use some of the pictures, sound modules, etc on my PC, giving me a little bit of the Amiga again. Thanks.

I think that Phase 5, etc have got the idea right, but I agree with Grant Sutcliffe (Backchat, Sep 96) these will be over priced machines for the average user. The A1200 market is desperate for a cheap machine that is very powerful.

A better idea would be if the A1200 motherboard was upgraded with PC components. The operating system could be modified to make use of the new chips, so the processor would stay the same but increase to 40MHz, with an option of an accelerator board in the trap-door, which would contain an Intel chip (a Pentium), which would allow the user to use the machine as an Amiga or a PC. Hopefully the machine would cost in the £400-£500 price range.

Mr Symonds, Basildon.

Surely that would make it a PC? And it would be expensive. Sorry.

Are you listening?

Attention games developers for the PowerPCAmiga and VisCorp/AT. If the new machine is to get off the ground outside the current Amiga community, it needs a really good advertising plan, i.e bill-boards and TV ads, maybe even an advert in The Times' 'Interface' supplement. A slogan could be: 'The Technophobes' Computer For The Future', indicating the fact that the Amiga is an easy-to-use, easy-to-set up computer. None of this 'Plug 'n' Play Multimedia' junk.

Also, to all the software developers out there: get quality games in the stores to coincide with the release of the machine. The Amiga community wants, nay, needs top games if the PPC is going to compete with Bill Gates' monster. Games such as Command and Conquer, Quake, Duke Nukem 3D, Resident Evil and the like really need to be programmed, but BETTER. PC? Pa! Primitive calculator!

Jonathan Hopper, Email: hops@thenet.co.uk

ROM cards please

We all remember the days when the Amiga was the ultimate home computer, when all graphics artists used DPaint and all games-players played the latest games like Lemmings. But all this has changed now, it looks like the PC is winning the race as the ultimate home computer. This is mainly due to CD-ROM drives being standard on all PCs. But there is something Commodore made standard also. Are we forgetting the Amiga 600 and Amiga 1200 both came equipped with PCMCIA slots as standard? When the A600 was launched, everyone thought we would be seeing new ROM card software. But software developers didn't do this mainly because most Amiga owners had A500s instead. Now though, almost every Amiga owner is an A1200 owner, if not at least an A600 owner. So I urge Amiga software developers to start developing ROM cards! It may make it the ultimate storage device! And to the readers of this excellent magazine to write or Email them.

From Joe Betro, Croydon.

You're great

After reading your magazine for years I decided to finally write in and

1. Commend you on a brilliant magazine (suck up). The cover mounted software,

be it on CD or disk is excellent. Also thank you for recognising that the A1200 is now the standard Amiga and making most of the cover mounted software run only on machines like these (it might encourage people to finally upgrade). Thanks also for your awesome homepage. It is one of the best I've seen in ages.

2. Grumble about all the people writing in and whining about not having the money to upgrade so software developers should make their software 1.3 compatible.

I didn't have a proper job until three months ago. Until then I was working for £25 a week. However, I still have enough money for your magazine, I also scrounged enough for an accelerator and 4Mb of ram. If you don't have the money for the magazine don't write in and whine, these guys need to make a living too. If you don't want to fork out the dosh for hard/software then send it down here, my friends and I will buy it. We are not afraid of upgrading. Between the four of us we have 102Mb of Ram 6 Gig of Hard Disk space, 2 Zip Drives, 10 Zip Disks, 2 4000/040's, 1 1200/030, 1 1200/020, 3 SCSI cards, 1 Cybergraphics board, 1 Flat Bed scanner, $1000's in software, 1 modem, 1 multiface card, 2 CannonBJ4000, 1 Panasonic KX-P1180, 1 Laser printer. Over here if you want to run the software you either grin and bear or you upgrade – you just don't moan about it.

Steven Covi, Western Australia.

A collector's item

I have been an Amiga user for over eight years now and have been a CU Amiga Magazine reader for most of that time. Inevitably then I have a lot of CU Amiga Magazine cover disks.

My collection presently stands at 131 disks, ranging from cover disk 139 on the front of last month's magazine, all the way back to cover disk eight from October 1990 which features a playable demo of Robocop2 and Lemmings.

What I am now aiming to do is complete my collection by getting cover disks 7 to 1 and the two 'Commodore User' Amiga disks. Is there some way of getting hold of these disks and if so ... how? I'd be very grateful for any advice.

Al Angus, Edinburgh.
Email: bono@post.almac.co.uk

Sorry Al we sold out of those cover disks a long, long time ago but anybody out there with those cover disks to spare can contact Mr Angus on the Email address shown above.

For the record

With regard to your August issue, I noticed a letter about minimum quantities of record pressing. Actually, the minimum in Europe is by a very reliable company called Gramafonove Zavody in the Czech Republic FAX: 0042 311 962143. They are also extremely cheap and offer pressing run quantities as low as a 100 units!

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for running the CU Amiga/FCI Internet offer, which I took full advantage of. The process was cheap and simple and I can now take my record label onto the net. Thanks also go the those support guys at FCI whose patience and advice was invaluable.

Justin Mitchell, Cold Spring Records.

Thanks for the tip off.

A show of support

After reading Andrew Clarke's letter in August's CU Amiga Magazine, I rang The Computer Store he referred to, to confirm that they had CD32 games in stock. I then drove my son to Doncaster, where he bought six games (five CD32s and one Amiga) for less than £28.

So, I have a suggestion. If Amiga users know of a local retailer who is supporting this vastly under-rated computer of ours, write to CU Amiga Magazine and make it known. This will make it easier for other users to find the Software they want locally, it rewards local outlets for supporting our forsaken format. So here's two to kick off with: Game in Meadowhall, Sheffield stock games for both Amiga and CD32 and at Virtual reality, also in Meadowhall, I recently bought AB3D for a mere £5.97.

David Green, South Yorkshire.

This is good news to hear David. Yes we would be very interested in hearing from other readers who want to mention a particular store that is supporting the Amiga in their area. Please send in the details to "I got it here', CU Amiga Magazine, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Tight wads

Who the hell do those Amiga owners who say 'Why won't The Killing Grounds work on my .5Mb A500 (V1.2)'... think they are? The rest of us go and spend hard earned cash on accelerators and RAM upgrades in order to keep the technology/scene moving, but these maggots seem to be oblivious to this fact ...

How many 286/8086 owners query why they can't run Quake or GP2 ? None because they'd never get over the slagging. Now I have both an A4000 and a Pentium PC. But technology marches ever onwards. I started off with an Atari 800XL and upgraded to the A500 then to the A1200 then added 4Mb/CD Rom, sold it and bought ... etc ... etc So this is how it works. And if people cannot appreciate this then too bad.

I just read in your mag Worms (V1.5!!) is AGA only ... GOOD, ABOUT TIME why should I have to suffer because certain people won't upgrade. I invested time and money in my machine and I should be able to enjoy the benefits. Games like the Killing Grounds kick ass on faster machines and this rings true with many other types of games: racing, adventure etc.

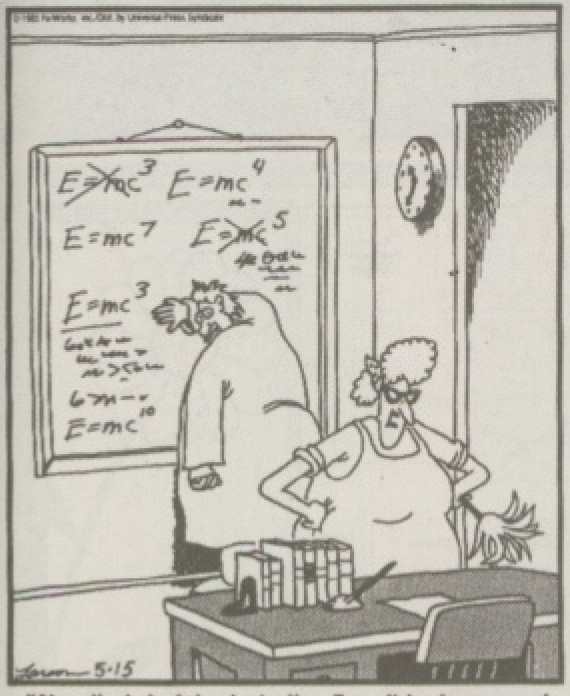
The Great Cornholio!!! :-), Emailand.

In the club

I have been using the Amiga for about three years and have collected quite a few emulators. As I have not heard of an Emulators club for the Amiga I would like to start a club of my own. I would like feedback from anyone using emulators or people who are interested in using them can get in touch with me by contacting me at the following address:

Mr Vincent Andrews, 35 Byron Close, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 4DX.

THE FAR SIDE By GARY LARSON



"Now that desk looks better. Everything's squared away, yessir, squaaaaaared away."

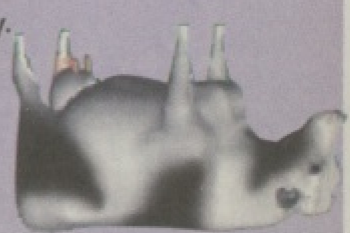
Those crazy cows

I am an old Italian Amiga user and I want to congratulate you on an interesting magazine. I've bought CU Amiga Magazine since 1992 and, in my opinion, the 'Workshop' is the most useful section.

However, I'm writing to remonstrate you about the article which appeared on CU August 1996 page 28. In the submitted article Mr Alan Bunker wrote that my country is 'famous for: Ferraris; fashion; MAFIA'. Thank GOD he forgot about 'Spaghetti; Mandolini; Pizza and Luciano Pavarotti'. But above all I want to know how you feel about discovering that in other countries the UK is known only for: 'the crazy [mad] cows; hooligans and sexual interlacements in the Royal Family.'

Also, Mr. Bunker should inform himself before writing an article like this because there are other magazines apart from The Games Machine which cover the Amiga such as 'Jackson Amiga Magazine' (81 pages with 1 disk full of PD), 'Enigma Amiga Run' (CD-Rom); 'Amiga Byte' etc ... These magazines deal with the Amiga only, and don't just delegate it only eight pages so they can pack in as many readers as possible.

Fabio Sanna, Italy.
Email: Fabio_ Sanna @amp. flashnet.it



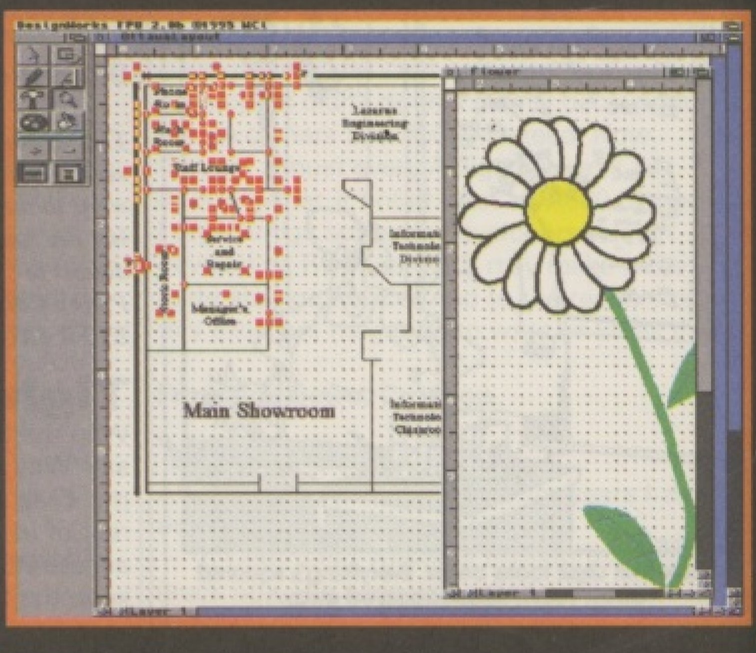
Of course you're right.

Coming soon...

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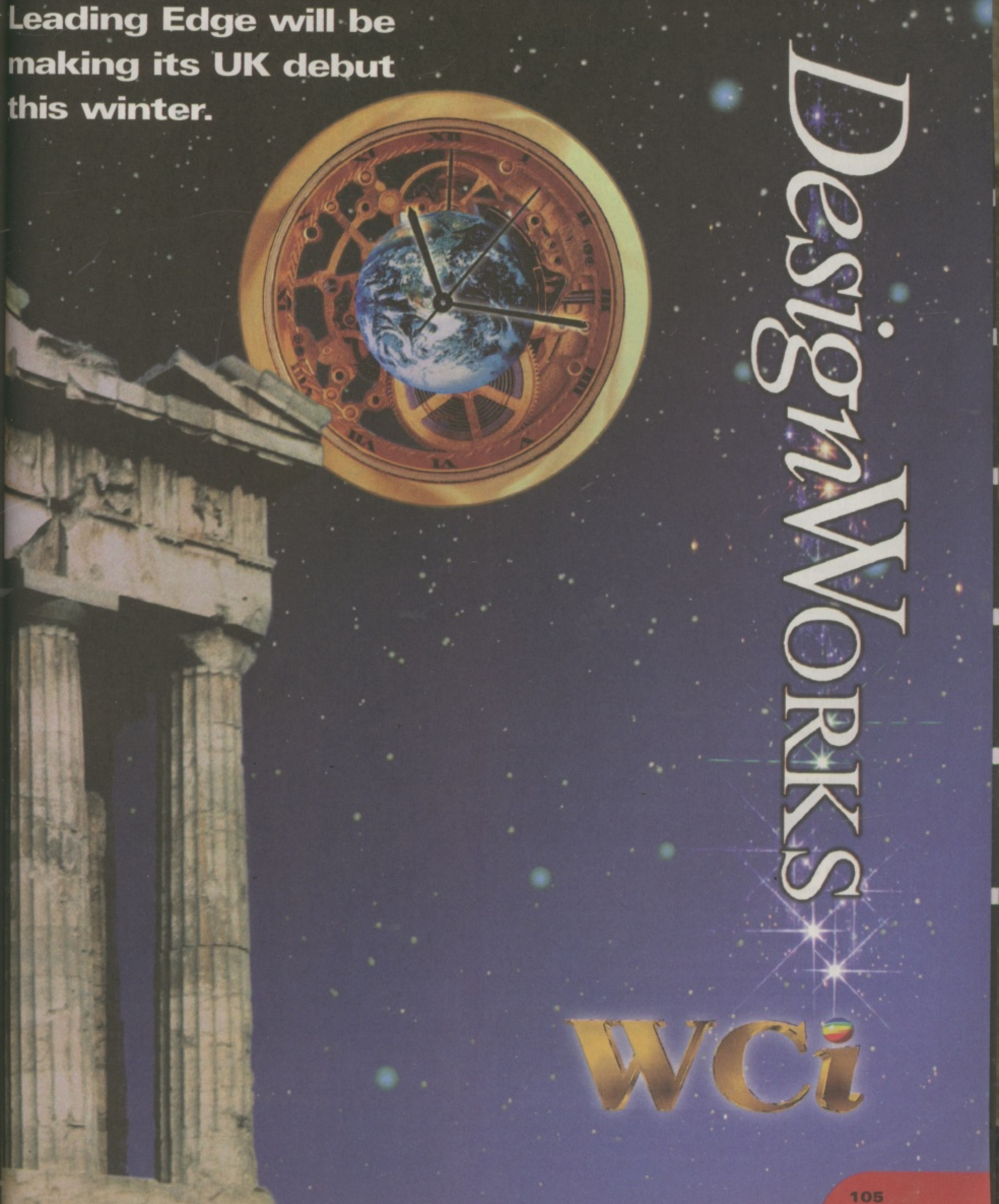
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